- July 1996 -

Hot Spring

Canberra Conference

Spotlight on Jaffna

U.S. Foothold in Sri Lanka

"WHAT THEY SAY"

International

RUSSIAN ELECTIONS: Who is voting for whom ?

"At a sexually active age, women vote for me. And women inwhat do you call it, menopause ? - women in menopause vote for Yeltsin"

- one of the Presidential candidates, Vladimir Zhirinovsky in a pre-election comment

"Unemployed intellectuals and veterans are for Lebed, unemployed drunks and lechers are for Zhirinovsky".

- Yeltsin supporter.

* * * * *

"(Israeli Prime Minister) Netanyahu is a lying, cheating, deceiting son of a bitch"

- Mustafa Hamarneh, head of Jordan University's Centre for Strategic Studies

* * * * *

"In my life, nothing has given me a feeling of joy or sorrow.

That's my nature".

- Indian Prime Minister Deve Gowda

* * * * *

There comes a time when you know there is no more time. In your younger days you have the feeling that you have all the time in the world. At an older age you know you have no more time. You make up your mind and you do it now or you never will be able to do it".

- one-time Indian Prime Minister V.P.Singh explaining why he wanted to pursue his artistic inclinations of painting and writing poetry which made him refuse the Prime Ministership.

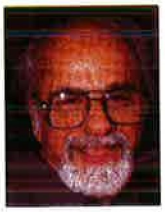
(Interviewed by N.Ram, FRONTLINE)

* * * *

"John Major's rhetoric is never matched by action. And on one level I can understand why.One thing certain about negotiations is that there would have to be change.And I don't think this Prime Minister wants to preside over change"

- Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams

* * * * *



"The LTTE was not built by the DMK. I will not name who built it but those people are sitting in Delhi..."

- Indian External Affairs Minister I.K.Gujral. in an interview with INDIA TODAY.

* * * * *

"Mr.Boutros Ghali has friends around the world and some will suggest a second term. But the United States has a veto and we are prepared to use it if necessary"

- US State Department official on US decision to force out Boutros Ghali as UN Secretary General.

* * * * *

"My only remaining ambition is to make life hell for my successor"

- Greek leader Andreas Papandreou who died recently when he reluctantly stood down as Prime Minister because of deteriorating health.

* * * * *

"She (Chandrika) is in power because of me. She should be thankful to me"

- former President J.R.Jayewardene's jovial quip to Ranil Wickremasinghe, alluding to the Presidential form of government. Quoted in SUNDAY TIMES. June 9

* * * * *

"As long as the LTTE is bearing arms, they will not be serious about talks. We have to tame the LTTE. We must bring them to a position in which they feel they have no alternative but to talk with us. When we are sure they have been tamed, then we will talk with them "

- War Minister Gen. Anurudhu Ratwatte in interview with Lakshman Gunasekara, SUNDAY OBSERVER, June 16

* * * * *

"To presume that merely by sending a Sinhalese army to take over the Northern province you could somehow wipe from Tamil people's consciousness the idea of Tamil nationhood and the right of independence, is patently absurd".

- Reader S.de Silva (UK), writing in the WEEKEND EXPRESS, Colombo, June 8-9, '96.

* * * * *

"Almost everything that is available in the peninsula, or is done there. have been the outcome of decisions made by the government or its agencies there,with the people playing a purely passive role,something similar to that of the animals in the Dehiwela Zoo".

- Lord Budal in Viewpoint, WEEKEND EXPRESS. June 15-16

* * * * *

"The debate over the package is meaningless because the government is not sincere. In order to get any package through, our support is necessary. Therefore the President is deliberately slinging mud at us to ensure our party cadres attitudes will harden and oppose supporting the political package of the government.

THE PRESIDENT IS INSINCERE".

- UNP leader Ranil Wickremasinghe quoted by columnist Suranimala, SUNDAY LEADER, June 9.

S. SIVANAYAGAM: 49421765 935 000 Pantin

Hot Spring

A journal of commitment

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From the War front

TRINCOMALEE: July 1

32 Sri Lankan soldiers killed, including two officiers, when an army patrol unit was ambushed by LTTE forces on the Trincomalee - Kanthalai road. The Sri Lankan soldiers from the Mutur - Kallaru camp were on routine "search and destroy" mission. A 'Buffel' armoured vehicle was destroyed in the operation, and arms and ammunition were captured.

TRINCOMALEE: July 2

Four Sri Lankan soldiers belonging to another army patrol in Mutur area, between palathoppur and Pathithidal.

JAFFNA: July 3

A sniper attack by an LTTE marksman killed a Sri Lankan soldier in Asaipillaiyidam in Thenmaratchi in Jaffna peninsla.

BATTICALOA: July 3

Two Sri Lankan soldiers were killed and many others fled with injuries when LTTE forces attacked an army patrol unit from the Arantalalva army camp.

JAFFNA: July 4

Brigadier Ananda Hamangoda, Jaffna Twon sector, and several military personnel killed in Black Tiger attack at Stanley road, Jaffna. Sri Lankan minister Nimal Sripala de Silva survives attack with injuries.

INSIDE

* What They Say * U.S. expands its role in Sri Lanka * State Dept. report on Sri Lanka * Throttling the Tamil neck * Whats happening in the North-East? * Understanding the secessionist phenomenon * Asylum seekers to Britain * In the killing fields of Kiliveddi * Presidency, Devolution of Power & Dr. G.L. Peiris * Australian journalist reports on Jaffna * Arjuna's Column.

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Peace with Justice

International Conference on the conflict in Sri Lanka
27 - 28 June 1996 - Canberra, Australia

CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION BETWEEN SINHALA AND TAMIL PEOPLES

The two day international conference on the conflict in Sri Lanka held on June 27 and 28 in Canberra has called for negotiations aimed at a just and durable political solution reflecting the reality that Sri Lanka is an island inhabited by the Sinhala and Tamil peoples, each with their own historic and traditional lands.

The conference stated that because of the mutual mistrust between the parties to the conflict the negotiations should be conducted in a mutually acceptable facilitation and be open to international observation.

More than 160 people, including members of the Tamil and Sinhala communities, and international experts in mediation, international law and human rights, participated in the conference.

The opening ceremony was attended by Mr. Ian Sinclair, Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, and the opening address was given by Mr. Bill Armstrong, President of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid. Justice Marcus Einfeld of the Federal Court, and former chairman of the International Commission of Jurists, said that "international pressure on the Sri Lankan government to move towards a negotiated peace settlement with the Tamils is essential".

A member of the Central Committee of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Mr. Lawrence Thilakar, said the military approach of the Sri Lanka Government would only escalate the war.

"The LTTE cannot be pressurised or made to accept under duress anything that does not meet the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil people," he said.

"However, the LTTE was deeply committed to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The LTTE calls upon the international community to (a) persuade the Sri Lankan Government to negotiate with the LTTE on an equal basis and (b) to play a facilitating role."

The conference statement issued by the sub-committee headed by Justice Einfeld pointed out that the present conflict evidences that the unitary state in its present form, incorporating both the Sinhala and Tamil peoples, is inconsistent with the peace and security of the peoples of Sri Lanka. It also called for the immediate lifting of the economic embargo imposed by the Sri Lankan government in traditional Tamil areas to relieve the suffering civilian population.

(Continued overleaf)

Justice Marcus Einfeld

Ian Sinclair M.P.

LawrenceThilakar with Bill Armstrong

AUSTRALIA

"Peoples have a right to self-determination"

Parliament of Australia the Senate

Senator Vicki Bourne,

Senator for New South Wales, Australian Democrats Whip, said in a message sent to the Conference:

"I regret that I am unable to be present with you at your "peace with Justice" conference.

"The Australian Democrats share with you the deep sense of injustice which you feel as you come together to speak about and reflect upon, the killings and senseless loss of life in Sri Lanka. All nations in the international community, including Australia, must act to put an end to this appalling cycle of violence.

"The Democrats deplore violence, in whatever form it takes. We also acknowledge that under United Nations Charter, it is not only nations, but peoples who have a right to self-determination. It is important for us to be reminded of that on occasions such as today.

"There is overwhelming evidence that large scale extra-judicial executions and disappearances have been occuring in the north east of Sri Lanka for a considerable period of time. It is clear that government forces have detained and deliberately killed thousands of defenceless people since fighting broke out. In recent years, the incidence of human rights violations has increased. The Australian Democrats condemn the Sri Lankan Government for human rights abuses committed by the military and police services, and we call upon that Government to uphold and respect the fundamental human rights of all peoples.

"If a solution is to be found to this crisis, which will be lasting and satisfactory, than all parties must be prepared to negotiate and work towards a constructive future. As a first step we call upon the Sri Lankan Government to immediately cease the military actions being carried out against the Tamil population, which cause heavy civilian causalities, and to lift its blockade to enable civilians to obtain medical supplies food and other essential services.

"In addition, the Australian Democrats call upon the Sri Lankan Government to invite the United Nations and its agencies into the country so that work can commence on finding a peaceful and permanent solution to the conflict. It must be understood that the way to resolve the problems of Sri Lanka is through negotiation and not intimidation.

"Accordingly, the Australian Democrats call upon the Australian Government to take a more progressive role within the United Nations to see that this matter is dealt with and that pressure is bought upon the Sri Lankan Government which would lead to an immediate cease fire followed by United Nations sponsored negotiations representative of all sides.

"You may be assured of the continuing support of the Australian Democrats in pressing for a just and viable solution to the situation in Sri Lanka.

Responsibility of the World Community

Message to the Conference from the Patron of the Australian Human Rights Foundation. ***Sir RONALD WILSON.***

Greetings, and welcome to you all. I regret that other commitments prevent me from participating with you in this Conference.

I particularly welcome our friends from other countries. Your presence serves to remind us that the future of all Sri Lankans is rightly a matter not only of international concern, but also of international responsibility.

It may not always have been so, but it is now accepted that a nation state's responsibility to promote and protect the human rights of its peoples is a duty owed not only to its own citizens but also to the international community. This responsibility, this duty, is matched by a corresponding duty and responsibility on the part of other countries to give active expression to their concern whenever the human rights of peoples beyond their own shores are under threat.

The fundamental objective of the Charter of the United Nations is the promotion of freedom, justice and peace everywhere in the world. Consistent with that objective, the basic human rights instruments adopted by the General Assembly declare and affirm that the world's freedom, justice and peace must rest on (and I quote) "the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family".

This Conference, and similar conferences either held or planned in other parts of the world, are an important, if belated, recognition of the responsibility of the world community to seek to make a contribution directed to ending the tragic history of suffering, injustice and lack of freedom in that unhappy country.

It is noteworthy that the sponsors of this Conference are two non-government organisations. NGOs have

LTTE welcomes call for Peace with Justice

Statement by **Lawrence Thilakar**
Central Committee, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

We welcome the constructive views expressed at the "Peace and Justice" two day International Conference held at the Edmund Barton Centre, in Canberra, Australia on 27-28 June 1996 on the conflict in Sri Lanka. The Conference concluded with a Statement calling for negotiations under international facilitation and observation by a Conference Statement Committee.

The Conference Statement Committee comprised:

Justice Marcus Einfeld of the Federal Court of Australia and former chairman, International Commission of Jurists, Australia

Pravin J Gordhan MP, Chairman, Constitutions Committee, South Africa

Professor Peter Schalk from Uppsala University, Sweden,

Karen Parker, Attorney, Specialist on International and Human Rights Laws USA.

Rev. Richard Wootton, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Human Rights Foundation

Ana Pararajasingham, Secretary, Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations.

We see this effort by the international community towards resolving the ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka as a very positive one.

We are also heartened that the Conference statement duly recognized and endorsed the fact that:

* Tamils are a people (Nation);
* The governance of the Tamil people must be vested in the Tamil people themselves (self-determination), and
* The Tamil people as well as Sinhala people have their own traditional homelands.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam is committed to a peaceful resolution of the conflict and respects the views expressed that an early cease-fire and de-escalation of the war is necessary while negotiations are proceeding.

While we respect the desire of the Conference that immediate negotiations must commence, the necessary conducive conditions must be created by the Sri Lanka government by withdrawing its troops from the occupied areas.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA

Peace, reconciliation and development are the most difficult challenges for our troubled world today. It is my profound belief that every effort to stop conflict, wars and human misery must be applauded and supported.

It is our fervent wish and hope that the efforts of organisations such as the Australian Human Rights Foundation and all other endeavours to bring peace and climate for negotiated solution to the conflict in Sri Lanka, will achieve this goal.

May I wish your conference every success in creating a constructive and inclusive dialogue among all role players in order to create a climate where negotiations can thrive and the search for meaningful reconciliation enhanced.

NMandela

Nelson Mandela
President
Republic of South Africa

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established a unique and invaluable role in the promotion and protection of human rights around the world, not only in terms of direct participation and involvement when that is possible and appropriate but also in stimulating appropriate government action.

I wish you a pleasant, constructive and indeed an inspiring encounter with each other in these two days, and that the Conference will result in positive outcomes for all the peoples of Sri Lanka.

U.S. Quietly Expands its Role in Sri Lanka

Green Berets help train soldiers, open paths for military presence

(From The Dallas Morning News, Sunday, June 30, 1996)

By Mark Kaufman (Philadelphia Inquirer)

Wirawila, Sri Lanka - On an air base at the southern end of this tropical island nation - about as far from the United States as a person can get - a team of 12 Green Beret specialists is training Sri Lankan soldiers in combat medi-vac techniques, radio work and field engineering. Live fire exercises are next. Since the beginning of June, the special forces team has paved the way for an expanding US military and economic presence in a nation that normally attracts Americans for its beaches, wild elephant herds and ancient Buddhist ruins.

Unannounced, and unreported, the US military activity in Sri Lanka involves considerable security and political risks. When the Green Berets leave their base, the go under armed guard.

While Sri Lanka is one of the world's most beautiful places, it is also home to one of the world's longest and most vicious civil wars. Over the last decade terrorists bombs, the shelling of civilians, and thousands of hightime murders have left fifty thousand people dead.

Unlike most joint military exercises, the Pentagon has not publicized the Sri Lanka mission. It has not been mentioned in Sri Lankan newspapers, which are heavily censored by a government sensitive about human-rights abuses laid at the feet of its military.

The training comes nearly six years after Sri Lanka was the only Asian nation to offer refueling bases for US warplanes during the Persian Gulf war. The mission also comes at a time when the United States is more willing to sell Sri Lanka sensitive "lethal" military equipment, and when construction is underway there for one of the world's biggest Voice of America Stations.

Until now, the United States has had a small apparent role in the country's war - a bitter ethnic struggle pitting Tamil militants fighting for a separate homeland in the north against the Sinhalese majority of the south, who want to keep Sri Lanka whole.

"We have no dog in this fight" said the American military attache to Sri Lanka, Col. Carl Kockrum, who helped bring the Green Berets over for a mission code named "Operation balanced style".

> ***Both US and Sri Lankan officials in Colombo say there are good strategic reasons to be deepening ties. The American military is attracted to the island's prime location between the Middle East and the Far East and near China. And Sri Lanka is seeking a political counterbalance to its giant neighbor India.***

But the small - yet increasingly frequent - presence of US military advisors over the last two years suggest that that formulation may be changing.

So does the State Department's official determination last year that the main Tamil group fighting for independence - The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or Tamil Tigers - is a "terrorist group".

And so does the recent finding by US human-right monitors that the Sri Lankan government is seriously addressing its unhappy history of harboring quasi-official death squads. That positive State Department conclusion - which some human-rights groups in Sri Lanka say grossly overstates the government's progress - allows the United States to move even closer to Sri Lanka.

For its part, the Sri Lankan government, which has long included anti-American socialists, is acting like a friend of the United States. Last year, the new government broke a campaign promise to reject plans for a Voice of America transmitter.

And although an official ban on selling US lethal equipment to Sri Lanka remains in place because of the government's human-rights record, the United States recently sold six patrol boats to Sri Lanka and, sources said, its discussing the sale of guns to arm them, along with military helicopters. Sri Lankan inquiries about night-vision equipment also have been made.

Although Sri Lankan requests for US satellite imaging technology were turned down, US officials guided the

(Continued on Page 28)

HOW CREDIBLE IS THE U.S. STATE DEPT. REPORT ?

Unduly favourable to Sri Lanka, says U.S.Amnesty

The U.S. State Department's Human Rights report on Sri Lanka for 1995 underplays the gravity of the human rights crisis in Sri Lanka and creates an unduly favourable impression of the Sri Lankan government's human rights performance.

This is the view expressed by JIM McDONALD, Amnesty International Sri Lanka Coordinator in U.S.A in a letter addressed to Christopher Rich. Human Rights Officer, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. (Room 7802. U.S.Department of State, Washington D.C. 20520)

In offering his Critique on behalf of Amnesty International U.S.A. (53, West Jackson Boulevard, Room 1162, Chicago, Illionis 60604 - 3806), dated June 6, Mr.Jim McDonald says:

"Dear Mr.Rich,

I would like to share with you some comments on the State Department's human rights report for Sri Lanka for 1995.

As you know, massive numbers of human rights violations have occured in Sri Lanka over the last decade in connection with armed conflicts there, including the current conflict between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The Sri Lankan security forces have committed tens of thousands of extra-judicial executions and "disappearances". Torture and arbitrary arrests have been widespread. While the Sri Lankan government has in recent years taken steps to improve the protection of human rights, a climate of impunity still prevails, with very few members of the security forces being held accountable for their crimes . . .

"On the whole. the State Department human rights report on Sri Lanka for 1995 is accurate with respect to the abuses committed by both sides to the current conflict as well as in its description of the positive steps taken by the Sri Lankan government to improve human rights protection. Yet it underplays the gravity of the human rights crisis Sri Lanka has experienced, and creates an unduly favourable impression of the Sri Lankan government's human rights performance.

> ***"Sri Lanka ranks second highest in the world. after Iraq in its total number of recorded " disappearances"***

"A reader of the report, for example, would not be aware that Sri Lanka ranks second highest in the world. after Iraq in its total number of recorded "disappearances", as the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances notes in its 1995 report. Nor would a reader know that, even with the human rights initiatives taken by the Sri Lanka government, Sri Lanka still ranked second highest in the world, after Sudan, for its number of "disappearances" recorded during 1995 (as also noted in the Working Group report)

"Some specific inaccuracies or omissions in the report are as follows:

* The report states that there were 34 "disappearances" committed by the government forces during 1995. in fact, 55 "disappearances" were reported during the year.

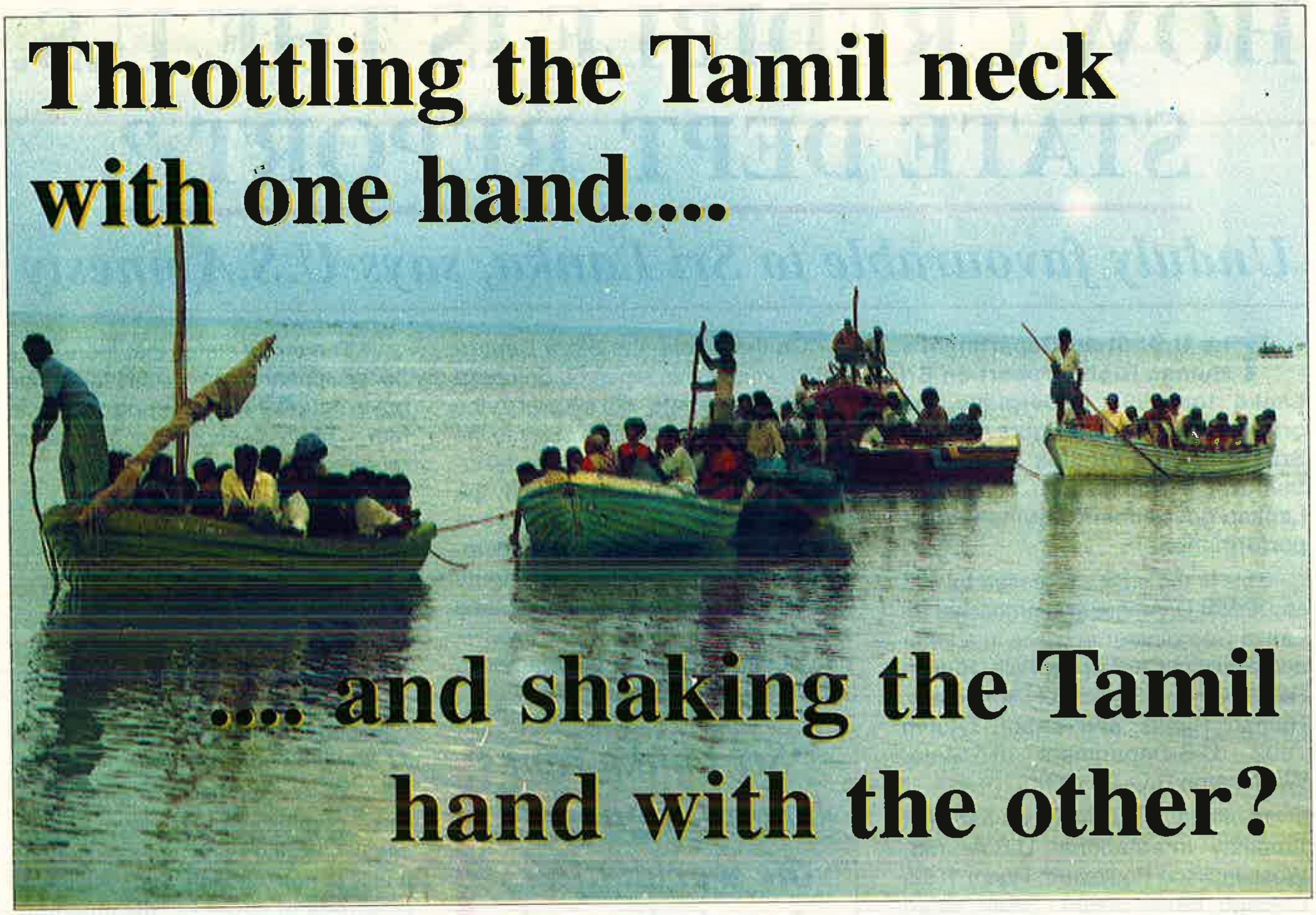
* The report states that after the arrest of security forces personnel in August, no new "disappearances" or extra-judicial killings were reported for the rest of the year. However, Amnesty International recorded several alleged "disappearances" between September and November, as well as 11 more "disappearances" between December 17 and the end of the year.

* The report does mention that three commissions are investigating cases occuring since January 1, 1988. It fails to note, though. that means that hundreds of cases of "disappearances" and extra-judicial execution which occured between 1983 and 1988 will still not be investigated.

* The report describes "disappearances" as involving persons last seen in police custody. In fact, all of the security forces. including the army, the Special Task Force (an elite police commando unit) the home guards and Tamil militias, have been implicated in "disappearances" cases.

* The report mentions that the commissions have received 61,300 complaints and also gives some indication of the number of "disappearances" from 1990 on. However. the report does not clearly describe the scope of impunity enjoyed by the security forces. The reference in the report to little progress being made in "several long-standing cases" of extra-judicial execution and "disappearances" gives the wrong impression of there being only several unresolved cases, instead of tens of thousands....

Throttling the Tamil neck with one hand.... .... and shaking the Tamil hand with the other?



While President Chandrika has opted to present the Legal Draft of her Political Package soon after the Jaffna victory in order to get the support of the euphoric and applauding Sinhala majority, the capture and continued occupation of Jaffna with its agonising consequences for half a million Tamils have hardened the minds and hearts of the Tamils. An objective reading of recent events leading to the military occupation of Jaffna will illustrate the folly and futility of her two- pronged approach - namely, waging a war against the Tamils and at the same time trying to push unilaterally a political solution pleasing only to the majority Sinhalese but by-passing the Tamils and their de facto leadership.

The Government's propaganda and justification about their being forced to wage a "war for Peace" only to weaken, if not wipe out, the Tigers or to force them to the negotiating table or "to liberate the people of Jaffna from the clutches of the LTTE" - all these have been proved to be false pretensions and unrealizable objectives. Neither the Tigers were caught by the military nor were they weakened, nor have they moved an inch nearer to the negotiating table nor have the people of Jaffna opted to "be liberated from the clutches of the LTTE" The mighty effort of the Sri Lankan forces in establishing a military corridor and reaching Jaffna thus ended in a delusive end.

Rev.Dr. S.J. Emmanuel

Caught up or bogged down into this deceptive situation, the Government is making propagandistic, militaristic and ministerial efforts to woo the citizens back into Jaffna. Once bitten twice shy, the people in exile have already learnt bitter lessons about the conduct of the army and they cannot be fooled any further. It's only the military withdrawal from Jaffna that can assure the people a safe return to their homes.

Though they have suffered and are still suffering immensely by their exodus from Jaffna, the Jaffna Tamils believe that they have survived, not only the heavy artillery shelling and aerial bombing over Jaffna, which could have easily consumed thousands of valuable lives and maimed many more thousands and destroyed their valuable belongings, probably for a prolonged army rule in Jaffna. In their flight for freedom, they have abandoned Jaffna, though with a heavy heart, to the State forces which rushed in with a vengeance to plunder, loot and even rape. The people preferred to risk their hard earned wealth and property rather than their life and liberty.

The same government sources which once spoke of "an exodus forced by the LTTE at gun-point" now speaks of the "wise warning given by the benevolent armed forces to the people to move out of Jaffna!" Neither of these, everyone knows, is the truth. In its effort to discredit and accuse the LTTE the government was resorting to false and mutually contradicting statements.

Thought a compete take - over of the ghost town of Jaffna by the Armed Forces of Sri Lanka is not yet a *fait accompli,* it had been acclaimed as a unique achievement by the Government of Sri Lanka and its Armed forces and interpreted by the Government as a successful completion of the first phase towards a peaceful solution. It has also been celebrated by the Sinhala extremists as a significant victory for the Sinhalese and a severe defeat, if not a death-blow, to the Tigers and to the Tamil claims for self-determination and autonomy.

Escape to freedom through Kilali

But to many Tamils the capture of Jaffna and the hoisting of a Lion Flag over it was an expression of imperialistic intention of the majority race to subjugate and rule the Tamils of this country. It was hidden behind the pious proclamation of "Peace though War" or "War for Peace" by the present Government and its supporters and has become sharply articulated in the military occupation of Jaffna, hoisting of the Lion Flag, the ceremonial Proclamation and the celebrations in the South.

Some form of an imperialistic wish, to be the sole proprietors and rulers of this country with the Tamils as the "dependent tenants" or "the subordinate minority" to be ruled by the Sinhalese, has been previously given expressions, not only by chauvinistic politicians and narrow minded monks of the South but also by the former President Dingiri Banda when he said in the crudity of village language that the Tamils of this country have to survive by their dependence on the Sinhala race "like the creepers of a huge tree".

With the defeat of the UNP at the last elections, the Tamils hopefully thought that such extremist and imperialistic intentions among the Sinhalese were on the decline, if not altogether dead. They entertained hopes that the Paris educated Chan-,drika will follow a non- imperialistic approach to Peace. But these hopes have been dashed to the ground.

Many well meaning Sinhalese and Tamils even today speak nostalgically of a return to peaceful coexistence. But if it implies merely a "social agreement" for a subtle subordination or an enslavement of Tamils, then the Tamils will reject it. The Tamils demand and fight not for the peace between the master and the servant, but for a just and honourable peace between equal citizens of a country. The fact that the Sinhalese and Tamils have lived peacefully in the past does not mean that there was a just peace.

Humiliation and Anger

The chasing away of half a million citizens from their homes in the Jaffna region by continuous artillery shelling and aerial bombing from the 17th of October onwards, and then the hoisting of an unloved, if not despised, Lion Flag over their empty-town as a victory over the Tigers, the Tamils and their demands - these have humiliated not only the direct victims and those still surviving in the North but almost all Tamils in Sri Lanka. The untold sufferings the displaced are still going through as a result of the military action and the tightening of relief services to them and restricting the services of the international NGOs - these have understandably pushed the Tamils to greater anger against the Government and have hardened their stance for any immediate reconciliation with the Government.

Tamils as scape-goats

Everyone agrees that security restrictions and checks are necessary for the safety of Colombo and its citizens, especially when feelings run high and emotions can end up in an outbreak of disorder and destruction. But the way these restrictions are implemented by the Armed Forces, with the assistance of the "patriotic Sinhala citizens" who appoint themselves as "security personnel" and connected corrupt practices make out all Tamils, not only those travelling from the North to the South and have to be in Colombo temporarily but also those permanently living in Colombo as scape-goats for any disaster in the City and as perennial security-threats for the City.

The fact that any Sinhala citizen, irrespective of his/her moral record, can behave as a "self-appointed-security personnel", and so lightly bring any Tamil under suspicion and pass irresponsible gossip over to the security forces and the latter in turn treating those Tamils to nerve-racking and harrowing experiences is in itself a humiliating discrimination of Tamils and a contradiction of the propagandistic proclamations of the Government that Tamils are equal citizens of this country and that they are treated so.

The house to house search, the suspicion cast on them by their long-time Sinhala neighbours and friends, the unlimited detention of Tamils in police stations, and a number of anti-Tamil checks done on the person, their property, money etc, including special police passes which over-rules even the national identity cards - all these were shameful and humiliating acts confirming much of the fears the Tamils have about a peaceful co-existence under a centralised Sinhala Government.

Hiding the truth

The right to know the truth of what is happening in the country is a basic human right of all the citizens of the this country. For purposes of military strategy and national security, the Government has a right to enforce the strictest censures at certain times. But the PA Government has gone beyond limits not only with regard to restrictions and checks but also kept a whole population in the South in the dark about events in the North. The thinking in the South and the moves of the Government are very much determined by the truth of what is really happening beyond Vavuniya.

It has prohibited local and foreign journalists for many months from going to the North. All war reports in the Colombo media, were tailored and supplied by the military and anything contrary was censored. This approach of avoiding the truth and deciding things on hearsay or from aerial views have been a major cause of the Government's failure. Allowing independent journalists and foreign diplomats into the North will help emerge the truth and favour a realistic approach.

Similarly the tightening of restrictions on most of the essential supplies to the North during the last five years has not helped the Government nor disabled the LTTE. Only the people are made victims and their lives inhumanly throttled. And of late all the international NGOs who are to help thousands of displaced in the Vanni district have been refused permission to have even their instruments of communication.

The truth about keeping almost half a million people in a displaced situation of immense suffering and continuing to increase restrictions on the agencies that could relieve them and the consequent slow - death caused to the population is not well known in the South nor in the world. Displacements from a series of operations, restrictions and sufferings have increased over the last few months that the accumulative suffering of all these has reached a breaking point of national disaster.

Tamil Eelam policeman on duty

Conduct of the Army

Although reports dished out in Colombo by the Army officer, and echoed even by some Church dignitaries, describe the behaviour of the soldiers in Jaffna as those of " civilised well disciplined religious human beings and not in the fashion of conquering armies looting houses, stealing goods", reliable reports of the few civilians still left in Jaffna to the displaced owners outside Jaffna via Colombo, speak of heavy and wanton destruction of houses and public buildings, They also speak of the houses broken open, ransacked and plundered by the Army. An army that is so used to looting and destruction, even in the presence of the owners in broad day light, as proved for many decades in the North and East, or a police force that set ablaze the Jaffna Public Library with the whole population throbbing with life, cannot become overnight angels and guardians, especially in the absence of the owners and in the dark.

It will be a real revelation to the southern population if an independent team of politicians and religious leaders from the South could be taken to Jaffna to see for themselves how the "heroes" of the Government have behaved in that ghost - town in the absence of its citizens.

Ever since President Chandrika came to power on the promise of "peace and no war" the country has at times entertained growing hopes for an approaching - peace as well as at other times suffered heavy disappointments at escalating War. **Compared to previous Governments, the pre-**

The agony and the burdens of war

sent one seems to have made the strongest moves for Peace as well as the greatest efforts for war. This double - pronged approach of making war against the Tigers and at the same time offering political proposals to non - Tigers to solve the Tamil problem is clearly based on a wrong analysis and understanding of the Tamil problem.

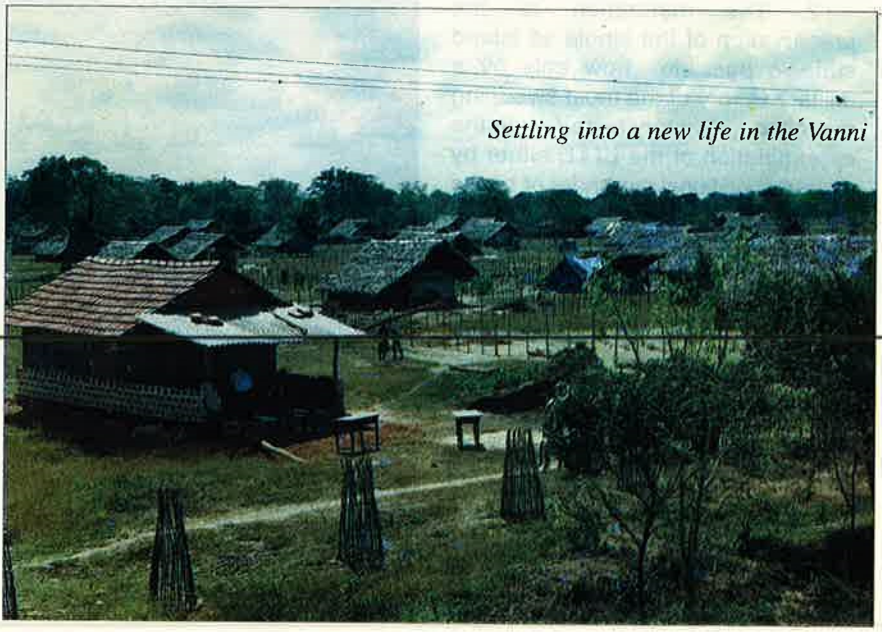
Failing to arrive at a settlement with the militant but de facto Tamil leadership, the Sri Lanka Government attempts to handle the Tamil problem primarily as terrorism and only secondarily as a political problem. In fact for the last President Dingiri Banda there was no Tamil problem but only a terrorist problem. Though President Chandrika has openly acknowledged that Tamil militancy set in because of the intransigence and political expediency of the Sinhala Governments in not solving the Tamil problem, her double - pronged approach of attempting a political solution with the help of a Colombo - based pseudo Tamil leadership and at the same time continuing, if not escalating, the humiliation and restrictions against their de facto leadership, the Tigers, is bound to fail

The PA Government is making the best use of its Oxford educated Foreign Minister with a Tamil name for an international campaign against the LTTE, for curtailing its activities among the Tamil expatriates and for rallying international support for the war. But it rejects vehemently every offer for a third- party mediation for peace. Who is for war and who is for peace?

Unless a breakthrough is made in changing this two-pronged approach, into an all out political approach with the help of a third party, the spiral of war and violence is bound to stay.And such a breakthrough is possible only when the Government courageously and without the fear of losing face, can pull back its forces from positions that humiliate, restrict, suspect and subjugate the Tamil people. It is futile to throttle the Tamil neck with one hand and shake the Tamil hand with the other.

Another breakthrough is needed with regard to the political package itself. What was started as a radical political solution to the Northeast ethnic crisis has ended up with a political package of constitutional changes for the whole country and for Buddhism. That a permanent solution to the ethnic problem be found is the dire need of the country and the wish of the majority, especially the Tamils who have suffered and lost valuable lives for many decades.

But the PA government in trying to offer a broad-based package of solution to the whole country (without appearing to be over-concerned about the Tamil problem) and to Buddhism (by enshrining a special status for Buddhism and winning their support) has met with a heap of opposition and run into unnecessary problems. The majority in the South seem to be asking, why a medicine for the whole country when the problem is only with regard to the Tamils? A breakthrough is needed in reducing the present package to a "Northeast package", selling it to the LTTE as a response to the Tamil demands and implementing it for a limited period of few years before considering it for the rest of the country. ●



Settling into a new life in the Vanni

Peace or war, there is a price to pay for both

Adrian Wijemanne

1. The National Peace Council, judging that a long period of intensive warfare is now inevitable, has called for negotiations with the LTTE. It urges that in this negotiation, unlike in negotiations in the recent past, there should be a serious engagement with the fundamental causes of the war. It is assumed that these fundamental causes are amenable to settlement by negotiation. The phrase "settlement by negotiation" carries in it the heavy connotation that the "settlement" will restore or preserve (depending on one's point of vantage) the single all-island state. That is the overriding end that must be subserved by peace. Peace is not the end in itself ; it is but an adjunct to a different end. If peace was the only end it could have been secured long ago. There is no peace because it is a secondary, subsidiary objective tacked on to the overriding objective which is the restoration or the preservation of the single all - island state.

2. The restoration or the preservation of the single all island state is possible now only by a military victory of the most sweeping magnitude, a victory based upon the extermination of the LTTE either by their unconditional surrender or by the killing of all or nearly all of its troops. No armed guerilla organisation, fighting on its home ground for national secession and independence has ever been exterminated in this way in any part of the world. That alone is not the sole reason why this aim is impossible of achievement in Sri Lanka. The principal reason is the backing that the LTTE will receive from the indigenous Tamil people on the island and abroad (and eventually from the plantation Tamil people as well) as the war escalates in intensity. It is not inconceivable that the Tamil population of Tamilnadu too could eventually become indirectly, but significantly, involved.

3. No society or government embarks on such a war with a full knowledge ab initio of its implications or its magnitude. It is sucked into it in slow degrees. Every war commences with an absolute conviction that it will be of short duration. Mr.J.R. Jayawardene, supposedly our most astute leader, entertained serious hopes that the Tamil agitation in the peninsula could be suppressed in 6 months under the iron hand of General "Bull" Weeratunge; later, he and the late Rajiv Gandhi decided to disarm the LTTE in 72 hours. The present government came to power buoyed by great hopes of harvesting the peace dividend and now spends an all time record of Rs. 38 billion on the war. Since the capture of Jaffna in December '95 a considerable escalation of military activity has become essential. After the next major offensive and the capture of some extents of difficult terrain even more military expenditure will become necessary. Eventually, civil government itself will become meaningless for lack of financial resources to carry out civilian programmes - perhaps already this stage has been reached.

4. There is a fundamental cause for this war as for all wars. That cause stems from the decision of the indigenous Tamil people living in the north-east to establish on their home ground a separate, sovereign Tamil state, thus dividing the island into two states.

They decided to disarm the Tigers within 72 hours!

This was expressed in the Vaddukoddai Resolution in 1976 by all their political parties in joint concourse assembled. It received an overwhelming majority of indigenous Tamil votes in the general election of 1977. 'The opposition of all Sinhala governments, from that day to this, to the implementation of that decision is the fundamental cause of the war.

5. There can never be peace on the island until that decision of the Tamil nation is implemented. War will continue for as long as it takes for that to be done. Any serious negotiation is possible only in respect of ways and means of implementing that decision and the establishment of rational. 'inter-state arrangements for the operation of inter-state infrastructure (such as railways, irrigation systems, post and telecommunication networks etc.) and security arrangements such as an extradition treaty.

6. Most Sinhala intellectuals and politicians cling to the forlorn hope that the Tamil decision for national independence in a state of their own can be bought off by a political settlement or by a combination of military pressure and a political offer. Nowhere in the world has this been possible in such situations. Recent events in Sri Lanka too have shown how futile such a hope can be. The armed nationalist struggle for separate statehood by the indigenous Tamil people has repeatedly killed at the embryo stage every offer of a political settlement within a single all-island state; the application of military pressure has only hardened attitudes and demonstrated the irrelevance of such offers and of that strategy.

7. The National Peace Council still reposes hope in the Union of Regions package based on a single all-island state. Such a state requires the exclusive monopoly of armed force within the state by the central government. This pre-supposes either the forcible disarming of the LTTE or the voluntary surrender of its arms - both equally fanciful scenarios. So far most discussion of this package has sidestepped this vitally important question. Perhaps there is an intuitive apprehension that this is not a question capable of resolution in either of these ways or, indeed, in any conceivable way. It is time now to depart the domain of delusion and enter, perhaps for the first time, the bracing climate of realpolitik.

8. We must decide for ourselves whether we want peace or war. For each there is a price to pay. We can have peace and a certain prospect of prosperity for the Sinhala people if we pay the price of recognizing the Tamil state in the north-east of the island.

We can have war which will exact a heavy toll of lives and economic resources, impoverish our people beyond present imagination, before long replace civil with military government and even so prove unwinnable in the long run.

No rational being will choose the latter. But that is the course on which we are now embarked. It is time to cry halt, reverse ourselves, as we have done so often before, and opt for peace.

9. The National Peace Council's initiative, more progressive than that of many others in the war hysteria that grips the country now, unhappily clouds a clear perception of the stark realities that confront the Sinhala people. If it is serious about Peace, peace has to be the only and the overriding objective and not one devalued as an adjunct to the restoration or the preservation of the single all-island state. ●

(Text of address made by the author to the International Tamil Foundation, London on 2 June 1996)

Tourism in Sri Lanka continues to decline

- By A.S. Assen

Sri Lanka's downward trend in tourism that prevailed last year, continued during the cumulative period January to April 1996.

The poor performance is attributed mainly to the North-East conflict.

Tourist arrivals for the month of April 1996 too, showed a similar trend, with total arrivals from Western Europe, North America, Canada, Latin America and the Carribean, Australasia, East Asia and South Asia recording significant decreases, while only Taiwan and Thailand in region showed positive results viz., 40.3 percent and 4.6 percent respectively.

Total tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka for the month of April 1996 decreased from 33,756 in April 1995 to 20,376, a decrease of 33.9 percent.

An analysis of the market performance indicates that arrivals from Western Europe in April 1996 showed a decrease of 47.5 percent compared to April '95.

All individual markets in the region declined quite significantly particularly Finland (-93.9 percent), Germany (-66.2 percent), Austria (-75.4 percent), Belgium (-41.3 percent), Italy (-48.8 percent), and France (-38.1 percent)

Among Australasian nations, Australia recorded a decrease of 47.8 percent.

East Asia and South Asia both dropped by 33.4 percent and 22.4 percent, respectively.

Among, East Asian nations, Japan's share of tourist arrivals declined by 43.3 percent, while in South Asia, India and Pakistan recorded a decline of 26.6 percent and 27.9 percent, respectively.

Arrivals from North America decreased by 35.1 percent and Canada showed a decrease of 40.5 percent.

Scheduled airlines accounted for 93.1 percent of the total tourist traffic for April '96, while charters brought in 6.8 percent.

Air Lanka's share of the traffic was 48.9 percent.

CAPTIVE JAFFNA UNDER ARMY OCCUPATION

On Tuesday June 18, the Sri Lanka government allowed a team of Colombo journalists into the Jaffna peninsula, for the second time in 14 months, this time for a less regimented visit.

The least prejudiced and the most impressionistic report came from Lakshman Gunasekera of the SUNDAY OBSERVER. Here are some excerpts from his report published in the SUNDAY OBSERVER of June 23:

✿ "The industrious Jaffna people know to do things for themselves be it Arul grenades. Pasilan mortars or "Kala Cola". Talk about "self-determination"! I reflect as I quench my thirst with Kala's Brand Orange Barley at Rs.15 per bottle. The bottle bears the Elephant House trade mark but the label is different. Similarly, there is "Kala Cola" in Coke and Pepsi bottles. I found similar soft drinks later in Point Pedro, again manufactured by a local producer.

✿ "The LTTE are the sons of this soil, our soil!", the slight, nervous-looking man who had accosted me glares intensely as he waves his right hand emphatically, indicating the dusty street and battered buildings around us.

Rather nervous myself, I look beyond him to the two young Army troopers who stand alertly behind him in the shade of a small tamarind tree on the edge of Hospital Road. But they are looking the other way towards the hustle and bustle of the central bus stand a hundred yards down the road and appeared to have missed the piece of subversive (separatist) dialogue going on nearby.Anyway, those stocky peasant kollas probably do not understand the homely Jaffna brogue of the speaker nor my Colombo English. simplified for the occasion.

✿ "The forces treated me badly", (says another man whom the reporter met). "They beat me. shout at me, so many times. Yes, I am saying so. I am...(gives his name), a technician. I am telling truth". He thrusts his identity card at me - it is a government agency ID. Another plastic-wrapped packet has two travel passes in the man's name. The other man, on the bicycle, with whom I have been chatting says the technician is a resident of distant Vadamaarachchi and probably has to travel through at least two security zones in his daily commute to Jaffna city. The ID is again waved at me. "You can say I said so. We don't want the Army here. We don't want any fighting. We want peace".

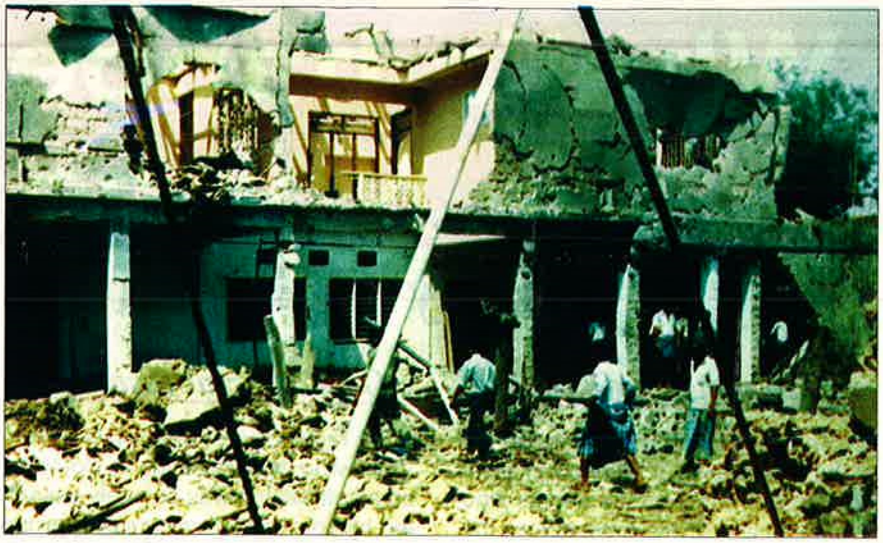
I am quite taken aback. Obviously the technician is so traumatised by his experiences that, in order to impress on others the severity of his experience, he is ready to be named, and does not care about adverse reactions by the authorities.

I thank the traumatised technician for sharing his views, and move away chatting with the other man on the bicycle. This man, yet another typical, trouser-and-shirt-clad lower middle class Peninsula urbanite, is active in the Jaffna Centre for Performing Arts, and we quickly find we have mutual acquaintances in several South-based Tamil scholars and writers.

Yes, he assures me, there are many Jaffna civilian with experience and sentiments like that of the embittered technician, although not all of them would want to be named and quoted. Walking down Hospital Street in the blazing noon sun with the Arts man, I realize that, despite my intellectual awareness of the savagery of the Northern war, coming as I do from a comfortably detached South, I simply could not anticipate the intensity of the trauma nor the powerful emotional reactions of the Peninsula citizenry.

"Battered Jaffna

•••••••• but proud"



As it was, after four hours in the Peninsula, I am already becoming used to the feeling of tension in the air. There is no escaping the war zone atmosphere, no matter how familiarly 'normal' the urban-civilian life I seem to see around me.

True, the people are going about the 'normal' business of life: shopping, walking or cycling along the narrow city streets, gossiping in the betel-spattered shade, or waiting for a bus.

But the streets are lined so much with busy offices and shops as with shattered buildings, locked up or abandoned homes, and entire blocks of over-grown ruins. The bullet holes are everywhere, giving the urban facades a strange, pock-marked look-as if marked by disease.

❁ Although a number of essential foods, like rice and sugar, are distributed free on a rationed basis, the quantities are inadequate. But rice in the shops cost up to Rs.100 per kilogramme.

The motorbikes and few cars and other vehicles that function run on a mix of kerosene and petrol. Kerosene is currently Rs.110 a litre.

❁ There is no subservience, however it is not merely a question of giving up fighting. There is much talk of a 'solution' to the conflict. The Tamil people want 'freedom', 'democracy', 'justice', and they are not afraid to say so in public, to the mass media, as I learn from the people I meet.

❁ Even the ruined building of the Jaffna Library, standing yet upright, while the once mightier Dutch Fort nearby is reduced to rubble, seems to be waiting for a revival of cultural life. Already attuned to the ravages of war, we journalists feel no sense of strangeness as we chat and stand around, amid these shell-blasted ruins of centres of culture and once-conserved sites of colonial history, awaiting our military helicopter transport of Point Pedro. The Classical Greek-style pillars of the ruined general post office, the classical Indian-style domes of the Library and, the bastions of the Dutch Fort form an eerie backdrop to our ad hoc helipad as we squeeze into the two SLAF helicopters.

Flying low and fast over the countryside I note that there is little sign yet of agriculture.

❁ The Jaffna Hospital is struggling to revive its services in the midst of an acute lack of staff and equipment and basic amenties. Only one operating theatre is functioning. There are no surgeons and only 52 of the usual cadre of 100 doctors are on duty. Of the normal bed strength of 1,015 beds only 380 are functioning, Hospital Director Dr. N. Kanagaratnam said. Of the total staff of 1,200 650 are back at work.

New equipment has been provided by the Health Ministry in Colombo but is yet awaiting its turn for shipment to North on the limited shippind service.

❁ In the cool wards of the Government Hospital at Puloly we interview a woman and her grown-up daughter who are the only survivors of a peasant family in a remote village in southern Vadamarachchi after some armed men in blue uniform who spoke Tamil with an accent had attacked the members had been killed along with a baby girl. The two women had been raped and beaten and slashed. ●

What's happening in the Northeast?

Diary of Events - June

June 4:

Even mats confiscated

Sri Lankan armed forces stationed at the Thandikulam military check point confiscate mats from the people who wanted to take it with them across the barrier.

June 6:

Night curfews in Jaffna

The Sinhala dominated Sri Lankan armed forces which occupied the Jaffna peninsula have intensified their military rule by imposing daily curfews on the whole peninsula instilling fear and causing hardship to the Tamil people who live in the area. Until a few days back a daily 24 hour curfew was in force throughout the peninsula. This has now been changed to nightly curfews from 8pm to 6am.

Diseases & Govt. apathy

Diseases like Diarrhoea, Itches and Rashes are on the increase among the displaced people who live in crowed conditions in Kilinochchi. The Sri Lankan government's restrictions on supply of medicine and medical equipments to the area means, the outbreak of diseases like these cannot be controlled and proper treatment and care cannot be given to the people affected. The outbreak is largely due to overcrowding, lack of sanitation and lack of good drinking water for the people who were displaced as a result of the Sri Lankan military offensive in the Jaffna peninsula. Some of the people suffering from the diseases have been admitted to the Kilinochchi hospital which is unable to handle the situation due to the Sri Lankan Government's restrictions on medical supplies to the hospital.

June 7:

Govt. official assaulted

A Tamil government official from Vanni who was travelling to Colombo on an official trip was severely assaulted by an armed Tamil quisling group at the Thandikulam military check point in Vavuniya district. The officer was attacked even after he had identified himself as a government officer and explained the nature of his work. In recent times the attacks on Tamil civilians travelling through Thandikulam check point have been increasing.

Run over by army truck

A recklessly driven Sri Lankan army truck ran over a school teacher at Valvettiturai (Vadamaratchi division of Jaffna district). Mr.Thirugnanasundaram, 48, father of four young children who teaches at the nearby Sivaguru Vidyasalai (school) was injured and admitted to hospital.

Businessmen turned back

Hundreds of Tamil businessmen from Vanni are being driven back from the Thandikulam check point by Sri Lankan soldiers. These businessmen travel to Vavuniya to buy essential goods which they sell in Vanni.

Colombo denies funds

There is no response so far from the Colombo government about the funds, which the Kilinochchi Government Agent (GA) says, are needed to provide temporary shelters for the displaced persons in Kilinochchi. A request for 600,000 Rupees had been sent by the Kilinochchi GA to the Colombo government long time ago but the Colombo government has not even replied to the GA's letters for funds.

Civilians hit by mines

Many civilians are losing their legs to anti-personnel mines in army occupied Jaffna district. The Sri Lankan military placed large number of anti-personnel mines in various parts of Jaffna peninsula during their military offensives and did not take proper measures to clear these mines before allowing the civilians in. Last week alone 3 people which included a student and two businessmen have lost their legs in Jaffna city. An employee of Jaffna hospital, Mr.K.Ravindralingam, 40, lost both his legs in an anti-personnel mine explosion when he was on his way to work. Another person lost his leg near Jaffna railway station area recently. Anti-personnel mines are found near schools and temples where the Sri Lankan military camped during their offensives. School children are often among the victims.

Ten soldiers killed

The LTTE forces in Jaffna district are continuing their operations against the occupying Sri Lankan armed forces. Yesterday at about 6.45am LTTE forces launched an attack on a Sri Lankan army unit which was advancing from Vempirai junction (Thenmaratchi division of Jaffna district) on a search and destroy mission. The attack lasted twenty minutes in which ten Sri Lankan soldiers were killed and several others severely injured. The LTTE forces also attacked the Vempirai army camp with mortar shells but army casualties are not known.

Diary of Events - June

June 8:

Medical supplies blocked

The Sri Lankan Government has refused permission for HUDEC relief organisation to transport about 1 Million rupees worth of essential medical supplies to Vanni which is under Tamil control. The organisation which is assisting in the provision of relief services to the Tamils who fled to Vanni from the Jaffna peninsula during the various Sri Lankan military offensives has medical teams providing much need emergency health care to the people in the area. But the Sri Lankan Government Ministry of Essential Services has bluntly refused permission for the medical supplies to be taken.

Mortar shell kills child

One child was killed and another two children were seriously injured in Puthur in the Jaffna peninsula when a mortar shell abandoned by the Sri Lankan army exploded as the children were playing with it. Death and injury caused by military hardware abandoned by the Sri Lankan armed forces during the military offensives in the Jaffna peninsula are on the increase.

Infant milk food gifted

Mr T Thuraisingham, the Executive Committee member of the Colombo branch of the All Island Hindu Society has travelled to Vanni from Colombo to deliver 500 packets of Lactogen, a popular infant milk food. The infant milk food was a donation to the infants in the age group of 1 to 5 in Vanni Tamil mainland who have been seriously affected by the Sri Lankan Government's restrictions on food supply to the district. Mr Vyramuthu the Chairman of the Karachi North Development Society in Vanni said all action will be taken to ensure that the food is distributed to the suffering infants immediately. The infants living in Kallaru, Kolunthu, Pulavu and Chundikulam in Karachi North will be directly benefited by this.

11 policemen killed

A Sri Lankan police patrol was attacked by the LTTE forces in Welikanda, a village that borders the Batticaloa district on Friday, June 7. In the attack that took place at about 7.45am in the morning, 11 Policemen were killed and the rest fled carrying their wounded. Two LTTE freedom fighters, Prithiviraj (Selvaratnam Selvanayagam) and Yogatheepan (Markandu Tharmalingam) both from Batticaloa were martyred in this operation.

Army post attacked

On Friday, June 7, the LTTE forces launched an attack on the Chettikulam Sri Lankan army post in the Vavuniya district. The army post which was situated to the North of Thandikulam and Chettikulam in the well guarded parts of Vavuniya district was attacked at 3.30 am before dawn. 2 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed. The LTTE forces did not suffer any casualties.

On Thursday, June 6, one Sri Lankan soldier was killed in Manthuvil in Thenmaratchi when the LTTE forces opened fire on a Sri Lankan army unit wich was in the area.

June 9:

2 businessmen killed

Chelvanayagam from Viyaparimoolai who was a dealer in gold and gold jewellery and Suntharalingam from Kamparmadam who was a dealer in firewood have both been shot and killed by the Sri Lankan soldiers who moved into the Vadamaratchi areas.

Armed forces block food

The Sri Lankan armed forces occupying the Mannar Island have ordered that no food supplies or other consumables be taken to the Mannar mainland area which is under Tamil control. The people who live in Mannar mainland areas for which the Sri Lankan government has cut off all food supplies have normally been going to the army occupied Mannar Island to do their shopping for food and other consumables. The new army rule has been made with the intention of causing suffering to the Tamil people who choose to live in liberated areas. There is a severe shortage of supplies in the Mannar mainland areas.

Mullaitivu shelled

On Friday, June 7, the Sri Lankan armed forces stationed at the Mullaitivu army camp shelled the neighbouring villages during the night. The soldiers fired parachute lights to light the night sky and directed their shelling on people's homes. The shelling went on all night.

In Ankayatkanni's memory

On June 7, a housing colony in memory of Ankayatkanni the first woman Black Tiger was ceremonially opened in Kolunthupulavu (in Kadawalai) in Kilinochchi district. The new settlement scheme was developed by the TRO and the Kilinochchi Refugees Development Society with the co-operation of the A.G.A. Kandawalai. The colony includes an elementary hospital, a school for small children, a market, and a village headman's office. The traditional oil lamp was lit and the National anthem of Tamil Eelam was sung at the opening ceremony which was presided by Mr Vinayakamoorthy who is the vice president of the Kilinochchi Refugees Development Society.

3 soldiers killed

LTTE forces launched an attack on the Sri Lankan armed forces based at the Eluthumadduval army camp while they were advancing towards the neighbouring village of Odduveli in Thenmaratchi. In the attack that took place at about 6.30 in the morning, 3 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed. The LTTE forces did not suffer any casualties.

Diary of Events - June

Army positions attacked

LTTE forces launched attacks on two Sri Lankan army positions in the Vavuniya district on Friday, June 7. 3 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed in the attacks on the two army positions which were situated at Vavuniya and Pavatkulam. LTTE freedom fighter Major Jeyaseelan was martyred in the operation.

Patients turned away

Patients have been turned away without treatment in Kilinochchi hospital for the last three days due to the shortage of doctors and medical staffs. Three experienced doctors who were working in the Kilinochchi hospital have gone on long holidays complicating the problem further.

Policemen demand bribes

All Tamil civilians living or staying in army occupied Vavuniya district have been asked to obtain passes from the local police station. Staying in Vavuniya without a pass is a punishable offence according to army rules. Sri Lankan policemen in Vavuniya are now issuing these passes through middlemen for a bribe of 300 rupees per pass.

Army advance stalled

Yesterday at about 6.30am, the Sri Lankan troops advanced from their positions in Kilali towards Elephant Pass with tanks and armoured vehicles. The LTTE forces confronted this army column in Pullopallai at about 1.30pm causing heavy losses to the army. There was no casualties on the LTTE's side during this operation. Following this assault the army advance was stalled and in revenge, the Sri Lankan army started firing shells on civilian areas in Thenmaratchi. Shelling continued till this morning today.

June 12:

9 Tamils disappear

The Sri Lankan Special Task Force commandos (STF) deny holding 9 Tamils whom they arrested in a cordon and search operation on June 4 in Amparai. The family members are worried that they may have been killed.

Civilians decapitated

On Monday, June 10, the Sri Lankan armed forces shot and killed 3 Tamil civilians in Nasivanthivu in the Batticaloa district. The soldiers cut off the heads of the two of the killed civilians and carried it away with them. The details of the 3 killed: Veeran Selvarasa, 37, father of 3 children, Kanthan, 42, father of 5 children and a school boy Vadivchi Paskaran,18. All the victims were from Nasivanthivu in the Batticaloa district.

Bombing over Mullaitivu

On Tuesday, June 11, at about 10.30 AM, two Kfir Sri Lankan fighter planes indiscriminately bombed the Mullaitivu Tamil coastal villages that lay between Theepapiddy and Koramoddai. This caused panic and fear amongst the villagers but luckily no one was killed.

Bombed and shelled

On Tuesday, June 11, the Sri Lankan armed forces attacked Tamil villages around the Elephant Pass army camp both from the air and from the ground. A military helicopter attacked from the air and the soldiers from the camp fired artillery shells into the villages. Casualty details are not known.

Naval boats blasted

On Tuesday, June 11, the LTTE forces destroyed 3 Sri Lankan naval patrol boats which were moored at the Karainagar Naval base in the Jaffna peninsula. Explosive charges were used to destroy the boats in the attack that took place at about 5AM in the early morning. 2 Sri Lankan Naval personnel were killed and another was seriously wounded.

June15:

277 Tamil girls held

277 young Tamil girls are currently being held at Gamini Vidyalayam (School) which is a converted Sri Lankan army detention centre that forms part of the Thandikulam military check point complex in Vavuniya. The girls who went to the Thandikulam military check point over the last so many months to travel to the South of the Island have been stopped and detained by the Sri Lankan army ever since. 106 girls were recently detained while 171 are long term detainees. The young Tamil girls are being interrogated and ill treated by the Sri Lankan armed forces. They are kept crowded up and under inhuman conditions.

Army instills fear

Life comes to standstill daily after about 2 PM in the afternoon when the Sri Lankan army comes out on the streets of Vadamaratchi in the Jaffna peninsula. Shops and markets close about this time fearful of the army. No citizen will be found on the roads. No school children will dare to walk on the streets. Every body stays indoors from the afternoon because the Sri Lankan army is out on the roads.

Police station destroyed

On June 14, just after midnight the LTTE forces launched an attack on the Alioluva Sri Lankan police station in the Trincomalee - Muthur district in the East. The policemen fled carrying with them the dead and injured. The police station was completely destroyed in the attack that lasted about 5 minutes.

A Sri Lankan army unit from the near by Mahindapura Army camp which rushed to the scene for assistance was also blocked and

Diary of Events - June

attacked on their way. One Sri Lankan soldier was killed. One LTTE freedom fighter was also killed in the operation.

June 16:

2 fishermen missing

10 of the 12 Tamil fishermen from Kathiraveli in the East who disappeared for nearly one and a half months have now been traced by the ICRC. They have been held captive by the Sri Lankan police in Trincomalee. The police were unable to offer any explanations to the ICRC for the fate of the other two unaccounted Tamil fishermen.

6 soldiers killed in north

On Thursday June 13, and Friday June 14, 6 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed and 7 were injured and one LTTE freedom fighter was killed in 5 separate operations that were carried out by the LTTE forces in Vadamaratchi and Thenmaratchi districts in the Jaffna peninsula over the 2 days.

Commando killed

One Sri Lankan Police commando was killed in Amparai when a commando unit which was lying in hiding to ambush the LTTE was soon found out and attacked by the LTTE forces in Thirukoil.

Captain Kanga or Velmuruga (Chellappah Kanesamoorthy from Muthur in Trincomalee) who was martyred during the attack on the Alioluva Sri Lankan police station in the East on June 14, was buried with full military honours in the National Heroes Burial Grounds in Muthur yesterday (June 15) at 2 PM.

June 21:

Bombs kill 5 civilians

On 20th of June at about 7.45 AM, two Israeli built Kfir fighter planes of the Sri Lankan air force carried out another bombing raid along the northern coast of Mullaitivu district. Civilians escaped without getting hurt as a result of the timely precaution they had taken. The previous day, on the 19th of June, 5 Tamil civilians were killed during a similar bombing raid by the Sri Lankan air force in the same area.

State aid denied

The state aid for the elderly and helpless people which was in operation for a very long time in the Island has not been paid to the Tamil people in Vanni for the last 7 months. Many elderly in Vanni including the displaced from Jaffna peninsula have been severely affected by the stoppage. The Colombo government has ignored several appeals by these affected people and has not sent any payments.

Training courses

Training courses are being conducted in every village in Vanni with the aim of improving the quality of agriculture in the district. Animal husbandry, pest control and environment friendly cultivation are the main areas which are given priority.

Exams at Kilinochchi

It is now confirmed that G.C.E (O/L) examinations will be held in Kilinochchi next month. 5500 students will appear for this examination in 19 examination centres in Kilinochchi district. Officials from the Kilinochchi Education Office have already left for Colombo to bring the examination papers and relevant identity documents.

Two soldiers killed

The LTTE forces launched an attack on the Sri Lankan armed forces in the Sithandy area of Batticaloa district on the 19th of June. Two Sri Lankan soldiers were killed in this operation.

June 24:

Army patrol routed

At about 7.45 AM in the morning on Saturday (June 22), the LTTE forces launched an attack on a Sri Lankan army Patrol Unit at Sathurukondan in the outskirts of the Batticaloa Town. 2 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed. The Sri Lankan armed forces having suffered heavy losses fled carrying their dead and injured. The Army Patrol unit which left the Thannamunai Sri Lankan Army camp was heading towards the outskirts of the Batticaloa town. The LTTE forces did not suffer any casualties.

June 17:

Hired hands for assaults

The hired hands who are employed by the Sri Lankan armed forces to assist them in examining the baggages at the Thandikulam military check point have also been given a free hand by the armed forces to attack the Tamil people who arrive at the barrier to cross over to the South of the Island. Many Tamils have been recently attacked by these army employed hired hands. The Sri Lankan military personnel who man the check point have themselves been attacking the Tamils who wanted to cross the check point at Thandikulam in Vavuniya. PLOTE which is an armed Tamil parliamentary group is also employed by the armed forces at the military check point. The PLOTE group roughs up the Tamils at the check point and extorts money from lorries when they carry food across the check point to the Tamil people who live in the North.

Undergrad joins LTTE

Sivasubramaniam Sutharsan from Tellipalai in the Jaffna Peninsula who recently obtained top grades in the GCE A L examinations and who has been granted unconditional admission to a much sought after University has decided to dedicate his life to the Tamil people by joining the Tamil Eelam liberation struggle rather than following a university career.

Diary of Events - June

June 18:

They defy order

The displaced Jaffna government servants in Vanni who had been ordered to get back to Jaffna peninsula for duty have decided to defy the order. Mr. S. Pathmanathan, the Government Agent (GA) of Jaffna has stopped the payment of salaries for the month of May for the Jaffna government servants who now live as displaced people in Vanni. Thousands of government servants fled to Vanni from Jaffna following the Sri Lankan military operations in Jaffna peninsula. The government servants have been warned that they will lose their jobs if they defy the order.

In a meeting held in Kilinochchi yesterday the government servants unanimously decided not to get back to Jaffna peninsula until normalcy is restored. They have also pointed out that Jaffna peninsula will not be safe under military rule and unrest still prevails in Jaffna district. It was further decided in the meeting to hold a mass demonstration in protest against the unjust order by the Government Agent (GA) of Jaffna.

Widows' welfare scheme

A welfare centre has been opened in Akarayan Kulam in Vanni to help the widows and poor women. In this project a scrub land has been cleared to erect 300 houses. 75 houses have already been completed and given to the women. The Tamil Eelam Economic Development Organisation (TEEDOR) has introduced special loan facilities for the women to start self-employment projects. Projects for the production of powdered food stuffs, coir products and broomsticks and a sewing & tailoring establishment are the economic program which is on offer for the women to begin their life in this new colony. An elementary school for the young and a health care centre are already functioning and five wells have been dug in the colony to provide drinking water. International aid agencies like CARE, FORUT and UNHCR have recently donated household utensils to the residents in the colony.

Quisling group in Batti

The much feared armed Tamil quisling group EPRLF which killed hundreds of innocent Tamil civilians during the Indian army occupation of Tamil homeland has now been re-introduced into the army controlled areas of Batticaloa with the blessings of the Sri Lankan government. Extortion of large amounts of money from the people has already begun.

3 children among killed

5 Tamil civilians including 3 Children were killed and 12 more seriously wounded on Wednesday June 19, when Sri Lankan air force planes bombed the Tamil settlements in Chundikulam and Poonaithoduvai areas of Vanni in the afternoon at about 2.40 PM.

Checkpoint order

No young Tamil men or women will be allowed to pass through the Thandikulam Military check point to go to the South of the Island during the period from 19th June to the 22nd of June, according to a recent Sri Lankan military announcement in Vavuniya. A reason for this current military announcement has not been given.

Plight of displaced

Displaced Tamil government servants who now live in Vanni areas say that the Sri Lankan government has not paid their last 3 month salaries. The government servants fled Jaffna peninsula when the Sinhala dominated Sri Lankan Government installed a military rule in the Jaffna peninsula after capturing Valigamam district of the Jaffna peninsula in December 1995 and the rest of the Peninsula in April and May 1996. The displaced Government servants who are all Tamils said that the Sri Lankan government was persecuting them for fleeing Jaffna peninsula. By refusing to pay salaries, the Government was putting pressure on them to return to Jaffna peninsula but "we cannot return there as there is no guarantee for our or our `family members' safety in Jaffna peninsula" they said.

June 22:

Co-op official disappears

Sinnathamby Nagenthiram, 53, the Vavuniya Multi-purpose co-operative society officer who went inside the Sri Lankan Thandikulam military check point complex on the 15th of June, has disappeared. It is feared that he may have been robbed and killed by the Sri Lankan Armed forces who are angry at any Tamil who goes into the check-point with sizeable amounts of cash or values. On behalf of his co-operative society Nagenthiram was carrying cash worth Rs. 2,300,000, cheques to the value of Rs. 20,603 and Food stamps to the value of Rs. 4184. His disappearance has been reported to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International aid agencies in Vanni and the Government Agent of Vavuniya.

Death by exhaustion

Yesterday (June 21), Sinnathurai Nannithamby, 64, died of heat exhaustion at the Sri Lankan military checkpoint at Thandikulam after waiting for long hours in a queue in the open under the hot sun. He collapsed as he was waiting in the queue. Mr Nannithamby who lived in the Jaffna Town had fled to Vanni when the Sri Lankan armed forces attacked the Jaffna Town in December 95. He wanted to pass through the checkpoint to go to Colombo where he could phone his three sons who are all working in Oman.

Diary of Events - June

UNICEF visit to Vanni

On June 19, the international representatives of UNICEF on a fact finding mission paid a visit to the schools in Vanni and saw for themselves the Tamil children in Vanni seated on the ground under shady trees due to lack of chairs and tables. Though the UNICEF officers said that they will rectify the position, it is certain that the Sri Lankan Government will not permit them offering any assistance to schools in Vanni Tamil mainland.

Cordon & Search

The occupying Sri Lankan armed forces carried out a cordon and search operation in Urelu and Urumpirai villages of Valigamam East division in Jaffna peninsula. Many young people have been arbitrarily arrested during this operation and taken to unknown places. Similar operations are being carried out by the occupying Sri Lankan armed forces in the Jaffna peninsula where many more young people have been arrested. All those arrested are being held incommunicado.

30 old people die

Rev. Fr. Selvarajah, one of the Catholic priests operating the refugee camp at St. Patricks College, a prominent Catholic educational institution in Jaffna, states that 30 old people died in the refugee camp due to the lack of food and medical care during the military offensive in the Jaffna peninsula. He also said that the church is doing its best to keep the refugee camp running but they have not received any help from the Sri Lankan army authorities or Sri Lankan government offices.

Police station destroyed

On the 24th of June at about 12.40 am, the LTTE forces in Batticaloa district launched an attack on the Sri Lankan police station in Kupputha area. The police station fell to the LTTE in few minutes and many arms and ammunitions were recovered. The casualties on the Sri Lankan police are not known. The police station building was demolished by the LTTE forces at the end of this operation. Lt. Easwaran of the LTTE died in this daring operation.

June 26:

Jaffna being turned into a military Colony

The occupying Sri Lankan armed forces in Jaffna peninsula are systematically destroying buildings, houses and trees to erect security establishments. A huge embankment has been erected stretching from Kondavil to Alaveddy for a distance of over 10 miles. Houses and buildings have been demolished to erect this embankment. In most of the junctions in Jaffna peninsula check posts have been established and people have to wait in these check posts to get cleared before proceeding through these junctions. Due to fear of abuses by the soldiers parents accompany their children to schools to ensure their safety. Civilians are also avoiding unnecessary travelling. Offices and schools open late in the morning and close early in the evening so that people can return to their homes through all the military check points safely before the night falls. School attendance in Jaffna is very low and no classes are running properly. Most of the office functions are also at a standstill.

LTTE's Trinco operations

On the 24th of June at about 10pm, an army-police patrol unit from Arafatnagar to Pulmoddai in Trincomalee district was intercepted and attacked by the LTTE forces. One Sri Lankan soldier and two policemen were severely injured in this operation. In another operation on the 23rd of June at about 10pm, an army unit was attacked by the LTTE forces in Kinniya village in Trincomalee district. Another Sri Lankan army unit which came to the assistance was also attacked. One soldier was fatally injured in this attack.

June 27:

Kilinochchi bombed

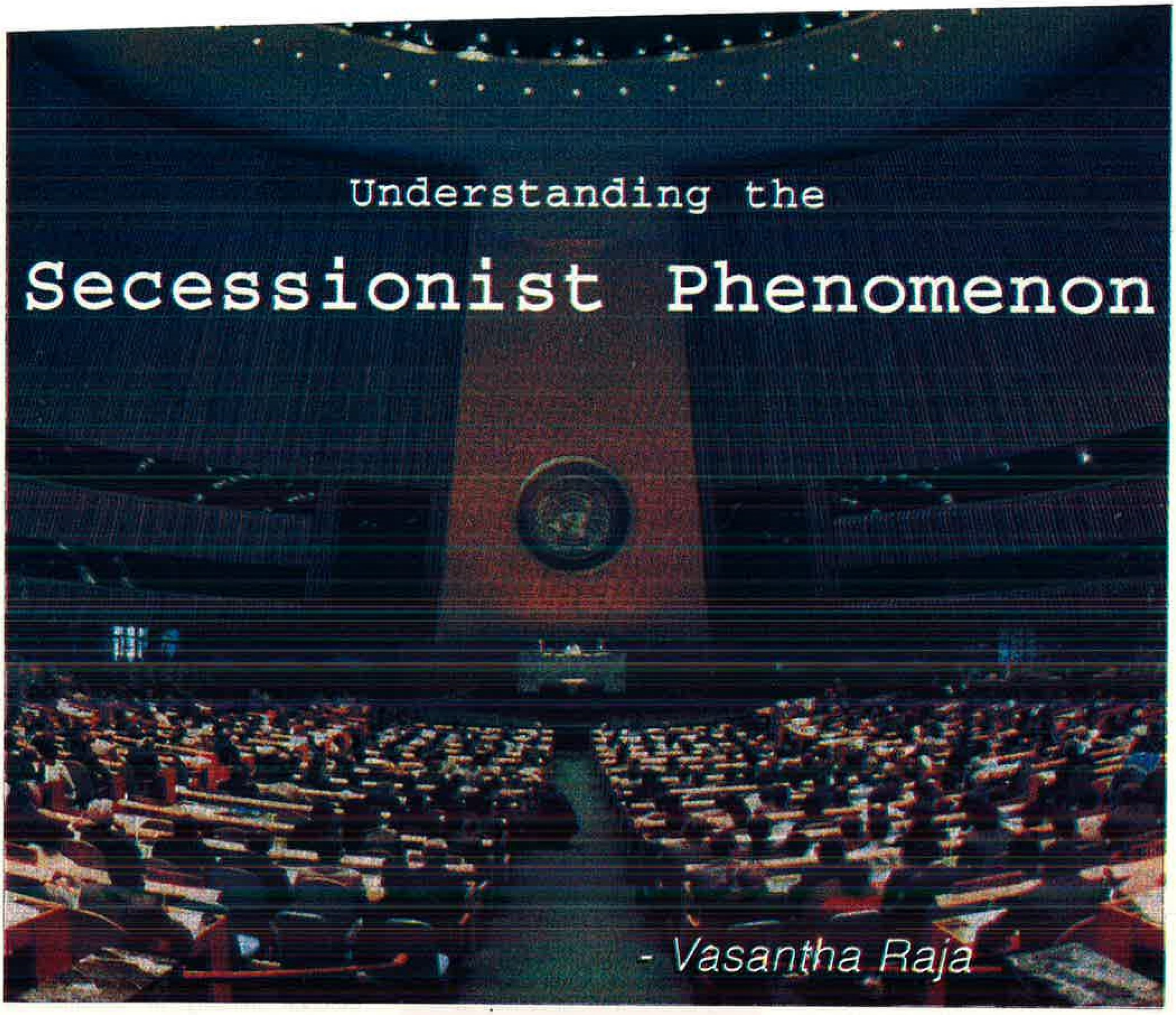
On the 26th of June at about 6.30 am, two Israeli built Kfir jet bombers belonging to the Sri Lankan Air Force carried out a bombing raid on the thickly populated village of Mayavanur in Vattackadchi area of Kilinochchi district. Four bombs with high powered explosives were dropped in quick succession. A woman Marimuthu Nagamma, 50, succumbed to her injuries.Two others were fatally injured. They are Rasakili, 35 and Selvakumar, 5 from the same family. Six cottages were reduced to rubble.

NGO's work blocked

The International aid agencies working in Vanni (in Tamil mainland) are finding their work blocked by the Defence ministry in Colombo. Items like roofing materials, medicines, polythene sheets and sanitary hardware are not permitted by the army manning the Thandikulam check point in Vavuniya. When requested for permission to transport these items the defence ministry in Colombo is ignoring the requests.

LTTE attack in Seruvela

On the 25th of June a well armed Sri Lankan army patrol unit which was conducting a search and destroy mission was attacked by the LTTE forces in Trincomalee district inside the village of Seruwela. Two soldiers were killed on the spot and others fled to safety. Seruwela was once a Tamil village which had been transformed into a Sinhala village by the Sri Lankan government in its war for land strategy. Many Tamil inhabitants of this village were killed and the rest were chased out of the village in the past. Then the SriLankan government brought Sinhala settlers to this village in a state sponsored colonisation scheme and the Sri Lankan military is stationed ever since to protect the Sinhala settlement.



Understanding the Secessionist Phenomenon

- Vasantha Raja

Although secessionist struggles for independence and the massive refugee crises caused by them now dominate the world scene, the international community - fronted by the United Nations - has proven itself unable to tackle them constructively. The UN's impotence is all the more pronounced for the appalling destruction currently afflicting war-ravaged countries like Sri Lanka in human and economic terms.

Primarily, this impotence stems from a failure, on the part of the United Nations, to adapt to new circumstances and overcome the structural defects it inherited at its inception. It is only by clearly grasping the historical content of secessionist struggles that the World Organisation can make the transformation necessary to confront the many challenges which lie ahead.

The first thing to understand is that contemporary struggles for independence are in essence no different from similar struggles fought by western nations a few centuries ago. In that sense, today's liberation struggles might usefully be seen as part of a continuing democratic revolution. (The ANC-led struggle in South Africa I also see as part of this historical movement even if the democratic principle involved was universal franchise).

The next point is that efforts to militarily crush secessionist movements have proved largely futile. All secessionist guerrilla wars this century have ended either in victory for the secessionists (e.g. Irish republicans in 1922, Bangladeshis in 1971, Turkish Cypriots in 1974, Eritreans in 1993) or have dragged on inconclusively (e.g. Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, Burma) causing colossal calamity for the people living in those countries.

It is worth noting that the peace agreements for Bosnia and the Middle East also represent transitional episodes in what amount to `two-state' solutions. The Dayton agreement is a two-state solution in all but name, for each of the two entities proposed possesses all the normal attributes of a state except international recognition. In the Middle East too the peace formula is effectively a two-state solution.

In solving many such disputes, it is vital to distinguish between a) the nationalism of oppressed nations challenging ruthless domination by bigger nations within unitary state-structures and b) the nationalism of oppressor nations which manifests in chauvinism, racism or fascism. In conflict-resolution, these two nationalism's must not be confused or equated.

It is of course possible for more than one nation to co-exist within a single-state structure. In such real instances, total separation has been avoided either by substantially devolving power to each nation, as in the United Kingdom and the Canadian Federation, or by introducing complete self-rule as in the case of the Benelux Union. (Needless to say, if the Scots in the UK or the Qubecers in Canada had suffered a minute fraction of what, for example, the Tamils in Sri Lanka have had to undergo, the United Kingdom and the Canadian Federation would have fractured long ago).

But in many `third-world' countries the unitary-states imposed by former colonialists have been instrumental in fostering oppression and discrimination on numerically smaller nations.

The UN must quickly learn to distinguish between nationalist struggles within nation-states and social upheavals where a section of the population wages an armed attempt to overthrow an existing government. The latter can be legitimately called "civil wars" whereas secessionist struggles cannot.

Secessionist wars consist of nationalist guerrillas fighting a state's forces from their home ground with the aim of separating from that state. So while the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and the failed uprisings by the JVP guerrillas (Sri Lanka) in 1971 and 1987 can be classified as `civil wars', the Tamil struggle in Sri Lanka, the Kashmiri struggle in India or the Chechen struggle against Russia cannot.

UN impotence

The UN's own frustration over its impotence became clear to me when I visited UN officials in New York last November to explore the possibility of UN mediation in Sri Lanka's national conflict. The senior officials studying "the Sri Lankan situation" sounded almost apologetic when they said the Sri Lankan conflict undoubtedly deserves UN mediation without delay but that they were unable to do anything unless the Sri Lankan government invited them to do so - those are the `rules of the game'.

Obviously, these `rules' were designed to suit a world facing very different problems i.e., largely inter-state conflicts. The biggest problem today, though, is national conflicts occurring within states. Hence the urgency of re-examining UN's own limitations in relation to the needs of the day.

> ***"....if the Scots in the UK or the Qubecers in Canada had suffered a minute fraction of what, for example, the Tamils in Sri Lanka have had to undergo, the United Kingdom and the Canadian Federation would have fractured long ago"***

Presently, only the UN's Security Council can sanction intervention in national-conflict situations, where the state concerned stubbornly refuses UN mediation.

But when the security Council itself consists of countries with vested interests in maintaining the existing state-system, more often than not, the nations fighting for their democratic rights become helpless before ruthlessly chauvinistic regimes. As the Secretary General of the UN himself has admitted, there is a pressing demand for the democratisation of the UN to enable it to handle the worsening calamity confronting the world as a result of roaring nationalist struggles.

Imaginative solutions

It is true that the success of nationalist struggles can be temporarily delayed, stalled or weakened at the cost of huge financial and human destruction on all sides. Yet, historical experience has shown that it is only a matter of time before these nationalist forces reinforce themselves and re-surface at a stronger level militarily and politically.

Moreover, those `liberation' struggles which have ended up in separation seem to have benefited all sides involved if we look at economic prosperity and social well-being; for, in the context of contemporary economics the size of territory has become irrelevant to a country's prosperity.

Perhaps more imaginative approaches and proposals at early stages of the conflict would help avoid total separation in many cases. **Western governments' present perception of nationalist struggles - as mainly disruptive forces - seems extremely short-sighted.** Their over-riding concern seems to be in protecting the status quo within certain friendly states with economically-beneficial policies.

For the sake of longer term prosperity, however, it would be far more profitable for the West to help both sides of the conflict come to an amicable settlement, which recognises smaller nations' right to self- determination.

Western governments must appreciate that the state structures imposed in the past by Western colonialists in many Third-world countries do not tally with the national complexities that exist in those territories. Thus, the `democratic-rule' introduced in some former colonies has paved the way for majority nations within unitary state-structures to unfairly exercise hegemony over small nations. In other words, some state-structures have bound together separate nations into an unjust and unequal relationship.

Subsequently, `democracy' in some countries has ended up providing incentives for politicians from numerically bigger nations to whip up chauvinism to gain political power, thus creating a vicious-circle in which politicians and the electorate from the dominant nation become trapped in a process of mutually reinforcing chauvinistic sentiments against minority nations and magnifying the will to secede.

(In the former Soviet Union and East European countries, of course, the same phenomenon emerged in a different way, for different reasons. Perhaps, in this context, it would be worthwhile to compare Mr. Gorbochev's approach to the nationalist struggles within the former Soviet Union, with Yeltsin's approach to the Chechen struggle in Russia today).

It would be a monumental error to think that hi-tech warfare can put an end to powerful historical forces like this, unless of course you are prepared to wipe out entire nations. Grasping their historical inevitability and searching for imaginative solutions would, in my view, pay off in the long run.

At a time when new technology has created a `global village' and the limitations of nation-states are being increasingly exposed before the rising hegemony of the world market, break-ups of artificially imposed unitary states under the pressure of secessionist struggles, in my view, are not as disruptive as they might appear. For, before long, many `nation-states' will, I believe, be compelled to sacrifice aspects of `sovereignty' to form closer links with neighbouring states under pressure from global market forces alone.

Perhaps the seemingly irrevocable trend among European nations to build trans-national institutions, (European Parliament, European court, European currency, etc.,) could be a blue-print for many other regions in the world. It is in this context that unprecedented and imaginative solutions for secessionist struggles of smaller nations should be experimented with, instead of supporting one side of conflict to crush the other, or worshipping the hitherto established state-structures as final.

World Focus

DEATH OF A MOTHER TONGUE

A third of the world's languages are in danger of imminent extinction, says Gail Vines, writing in a recent issue of the NEW SCIENTIST. For every one that dies, a whole culture and way of thinking may be lost for ever, says the writer.

"Just five languages - Chinese, English, Spanish, Russian and Hindi - have now infected more than half the world's people. Add fewer than 100 other languages to the list and the infection rate is more than 95 percent of the world's population.

"Yet the planet is also home to some 6000 other languages - the vast majority spoken by only tiny numbers of people. More than half of these languages could well die out with their last remaining speakers sometime during the next hundred years.

"This fate is certain for AORE. now confined to the sole native inhabitant of an island in the remote Pacific republic of Vanuatu. It is one of the dozens of languages spoken by only one or two people, says Andrew Woodfield, who directs the Centre for Theories of Language and Learning at the University of Bristol.

"About a third of the world's languages are now spoken by fewer than a thousand people and are in immediate danger. But linguists fear that even languages with hundreds of thousands of speakers may soon succumb to pressure from the "big" prestige languages. At most, only 600 of the world's languages can be described as "safe", says Michael Krauss, a linguist at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks.

"It is easy, says Krauss, to spot a language on the brink of extinction: parents will have stopped teaching it to their children, and children would have stopped wanting to learn it.... "Each language is unique in a deep sense", says Christopher

Moseley, a linguist at the BBC and editor of Routledge's new Atlas of the World's Languages. "It is the repository of accumulated thoughts and experiences of people, their metaphors, and specialised knowledge, their unique experiences that developed over many lifetimes".... Languages need to be preserved first and foremost because they help people to retain their culture, argues Krauss. "The world would be less beautiful and less interesting without linguistic diversity".....

WORLD'S CITIES ARE GETTING OVER-POPULATED

Istanbul - The brute facts of soaring population in the burgeoning metropolises of Africa. Asia and Latin America permeated every session of Habitat II, the UN-sponsored "City Summit" that ended in Istanbul on June 15

While close to half the world's population already lives in urban slums, people of the developing world still pour into the cities in hope of some chance for a better life.

By 2015, only one of the globe's largest cities - Tokyo - with 28.7 million people. will be in the developed world. The others are projected to be : Bombay (27.4 million); Lagos (24.4); Shanghai(23.4); Jakarta (21.2): Sao Paulo (20.8); Karachi (20.6); Beijing (19.4); Dhaka (19); and Mexico City (18.8).

Asylum Seekers to Britain

Rachel Hallburton contests the Asylum Bill (From "The Big Issue")

Asylum seekers to Britain are being thrown out of the country because interpreters are distorting their words. Rachel Halllburton continues our campaign against the Asylum Bill.

Svajini, only 21, has experienced more horrors than most people will ever see in a lifetime. The hellish catalogue of events that brought her from Sri Lanka to Britain began with her being bombed out of successive homes by the Sri Lankan army. Then came the arrest of her family and witnessing her brother's torture. Eventually she suffered her own ordeal in which chunks of her hair were pulled out, cigarettes were stubbed out on her body, and her head was smashed against a wall. Finally, while unconscious, she was raped by a Sri Lankan police officer.

The Sri Lankan police tortured her further with their own interpretation of events. The door of Svajini's cell, when opened, revealed a girl with torn clothes and a terrified expression on her face. Speedily the label 'mad' was substituted for the more incriminating label of 'rape victim'. And if she tried to claim otherwise, her rapist told her, her family would be shot.

In such a political climate, Svajini's words would have carried no currency, either in any attempt to seek justice, or to achieve her own security. So she came to Britain, and joined the asylum applicants who last year numbered 43 965.

As with 90 percent of these applicants her first attempts to express the circumstances which brought her to Britain had to be filtered through a Home Office-supplied interpreter who was largely in control of how her story was conveyed to the immigration officer conducting her asylum interview.

However, Svajini is just one of many asylum seekers who have discovered how interpreters relay a distorted version of the facts, either because of biased viewpoint or because of linguistic incompetence. Such distortions often prevent people like Svajini gaining asylum.

"The interpreter told me to say I came to England to study," Svajini says, describing her first encounter with her interpreter. "He said I would not be accepted if I just said I was an asylum seeker.

"In the second interview he was very rude. He said that if I told them the Sri Lankan Government and army had tortured me they would not listen, because the English Government is friendly with the Sri Lankan Government. He told me to blame a separatist organisation-the Tamil Tigers."

The case of the Tamil girl Svajini (21)

These were the first in a series of details that Svajini was asked to change for her own 'benefit', Her story, confused because of fabrications she was instructed to make, did not hang together. Initially she was refused asylum.

One of the key stumbling blocks to Svajini's appeal against this decision was that it was her word against the interpreter's. Three firms of solicitors who represented her failed to examine her full story and any reasons for discrepancies. Eventually, however, she found a solicitor who was not only prepared to take her on, but had also experienced many problems with other Home Office interpreters.

David Burgess, a leading immigration lawyer working for Winstanley Burgess, is one of the increasing number of legal professionals who are concerned by the number of reports, both from independent interpreters and from clients, that Home Office interpreters do not do their job properly. "Immigration is rife with power situations," he explains. "Because you're dealing with people who are frightened. Svajini explained to me how she fell into the hands of an interpreter who bullied and manipulated her, and abused his power situation."

Svajini's experience is an extreme example of interference by interpreters. Other reported problems have included the ordeal of an applicant who was complaining that the IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Force) had hit and assaulted him. The interpreter allegedly said, "Don't tell lies-you came here to earn."

The Home Office only accepted 4.3 percent of applicants last year. The odds are therefore already stacked firmly against an asylum applicant, lowering his or her credibility in the eyes of the Home Office should a complaint be made.

"The great majority of asylum applicants fail because they do not meet the standards set by the UN's 1951 Convention on Refugees," says a Home Office spokesperson. "This shows that people are abusing our asylum system."

As complaints about failures in communication fall on the Home Office's deaf ears, there is also increasing evidence that when interpreter's failure to preform properly is linguistic rather than down to bias, the implications can be drastic. Even skilled and experienced interpreters can misrepresent their client, simply by picking up the wrong meaning of word which has a variety of translations.

Anyone from a native speaker of a language to an individual with no more than an A-level in the relevant language - is eligible to become a Home Office interpreter, and the induction course lasts only a few hours.

Sri Lanka - failure of the unitary state

SINNAPPU MAHARASINGHAM puts the Tamil case against the Sri Lankan unitary state

Sri Lanka stands at the tip end of Peninsular (Dravida) India, tear-shaped and tear-filled. For over 2,000 years of its history, both the Sinhalese people and the Tamil speaking people have developed into two separate linguistic, cultural and political entities - the Sinhalese occupying the South and Central highlands and the Tamils the north and east of Sri Lanka.

Under monarchical systems of governance they lived separate existences, interspersed by war and peace, with nothing to share in between them. Historical records show that under the kings both races of people withstood expansionist forces from Peninsular India, and dynastic disturbances within the Sinhalese and Tamils always procured South Indian military support. This continuing historical replication of ancient rivalries is further refined as a formula of Sinhala racist domination; this is demonstrated by the present President Chandrika Kumaratunga regime's refusal to view the prospect of Tamil self-rule as an invigorating political aspiration of 4 million (now much reduced by repression and displacement) Tamil people of the homelands. This will undoubtedly open up new vistas of freedom to communicate and to overcome inherited constraints, whether emotional, circumstantial or intellectual for all the races that inhabit this island.

It is the lack of perception in the international community, United Nations, Non-Government Organistions, western governments (in particular Britain), in not recognising that the Tamil people have always expressed their ancient right of Tamil identity only under self-rule. What the Sinhalese are trying to force down the Tamil throat under a mythical "unitary system" is racial domination and an inferior status of second class citizenship, having denied to them by law the right to official usage of the Tamil language in 1956. The record speaks for itself - four decades of state repression and terrorism and over a million people displaced internally, fled as refugees, disappeared and brutally massacred since the anti-Tamil program of 1958. It is this "ethnic cleansing" that, under the leadership of the Tiger leader Veluppilai Prabaharan, has rekindled the fire of militancy amongst Tamil youths. This is "Liberation" from colonialism which oppresses all the poorer sections of the peoples alike and which the Sinhala elite have failed to take note of. The power of the Sinhala Presidents, Sinhala governments, Sinhala security forces, Sinhala Buddhist clergy and Sinhala chauvinists continue to call for a "unitary Sri Lanka which is to "ethnically cleanse" the Tamil people in their homelands, as is happening now. This is what the Tamil Tigers are challenging.

During the first 400 years of foreign conquest, first by the Portuguese, then the Dutch and last by the British, the Tamil-speaking people of Ceylon (Sri

The statue of Tamil King Sankiliyan in Jaffna

Lanka) survived as a people, because their traditional educational, occupational and cultural infrastructure were largely impenetrable, although the Tamil kingdom fell to the Portuguese in frontal war, when King Sankili of Jaffna was taken prisoner to Goa and hung in 1619. The Dutch also maintained the separate identities of both races and brought Javanese soldiers to quell Tamil rebellion in Jaffna. It was the British who sought to bring both races together for administrative convenience (1833 Colebrooke Commission), when the Vanni Tamil chieftain Pandara Vannian took up arms against the British forces and was killed in a frontal war in 1803. When the British left in 1948 the constitutional safeguards they entrenched in a "unitary" constitution for the preservation of the Tamil identity, proved very weak, in spite of opposition from Tamil representatives for restoration of Tamil self-rule. Britain left the Tamils at the mercy of an insensitive Sinhala society.

Tamil resistance to a unitary constitution, which stifles Tamil aspirations, has been proved correct to this day. "The makings of an embattled freedom movement now seen assembled: martyrs, prisoners and a pitiful refugees... Biafra seemed less real in 1969", so warned Walter Schwarz in a Minority Rights Group report ,"Tamils of Sri Lanka" (1975). The social cohesion law, custom and tradition is now being severely tested in the Tamil homelands. In recent weeks over 500, 000 Tamil people have been uprooted and dispossessed, and deprived of essential items for survival, in a secret war, with press and TV censorship.

Unlike the Bosnian or Chechian struggle against oppressors, the Tamil struggle for self-rule is kept out of sight of the western democracies, who support this murderous government with aid and sale of arms. The British government has continued to forcibly deport Tamil asylum seekers to Sri Lanka, where they face torture, death and disappearances at the hands of the police and death squads in Colombo.

Vast stock piles of modern weaponry is another indication of President Chandrika's slippery road to a military "dictatorship", for she and her government know that an intensely divided Sinhala society will not vote for her minimal devolution package and get the Opposition support for a two-third majority in Parliament.

The majority of Sinhala Buddhist society, which is politically controlled by the clergy and the laity has the final say about everything in Sri Lanka. They can abrogate any agreement or understanding between the two major races. This monopolistic control and domination are backed by the reactionaries, the chauvinists and petit bourgeosie, which are today dominant. They appear as a priest laden society working to the utter destruction of the Tamil race and doing harm to the roots of their own society. Tamils should not be drawn into any bargain. Tamil society, like Cuban society, is in perennial state of liberation and openly shows where the point of parting lies within the inertia of Sinhala political intransigence.

Failure by President Chandrika Kumaratunga, at this point in time, to recognise the mood of the Tamil Tiger leadership and act courageously will amount to prevarication in line with that of her predecessors, which will only strengthen the hands of the state military. A golden opportunity for dialogue and a negotiated settlement with the Tamil Tiger Leader Velupillai Prabaharan, under the auspices of the United Nations, will slip away and Tamil Tiger guerilla forces will spread their wings, for in their commitment to self-rule, they are a force to be reckoned with. In Sri Lanka, where human nature seems fatally flawed, will the devolution package work for the Tamil people, for whom it is ultimately intended? ●

(By courtesy of LIBERATION magazine, London Vol. 39. 1996)

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CLOSING DATE 31 July 1996.

U.S. Quietly Expands...

(Continuation from Page 6)

Sri Lankans to Israeli suppliers of advanced surveillance technology.

All these steps, US officials say are possible because of the dramatic improvement in Sri Lanka's human-rights record.

Both US and Sri Lankan officials in Colombo say there are good strategic reasons to be deepening ties. The American military is attracted to the islands prime location between the Middle East and the Far East and near China. And Sri Lanka is seeking a political counterbalance to its giant neighbor India.

But both sides also say they have good reason to keep their arrangements low-key. International and political affairs can be perilous business here. Consider the experience of the Indian Army.

Saying it was on a peace keeping mission to help solve the Tamil-Singhalese ethnic war, India sent fifty thousand troops there in 1987, with the apparent approval of all parties. Three years later, and after 1500 soldiers were killed, India left Sri Lanka in a Vietnam-style defeat.

With a blood history like this, its is not surprising that the Green Beret team arrived unannounced. In a recent interview, the Sri Lankan foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar denied that any American soldiers were on active duty in his country. None the less, a second round of joint exercises is scheduled for the fall.

This studied silence is quite a change from the fanfare that usually accompanies similar joint military exercises held by the US commander in chief, Pacific (CINPAC) in Thailand, India, Indonesia and other Asian countries.

Indeed, the policy goal that drives the Joint Command Exercise and Training Program is one of peacetime "engagement" with "sister militaries". In theory, the local military receives valuable training while the US military gains knowledge - for possible future use - about how that foreign military works. The program is also supposed to create an aura of good feeling between both sides.

But in those other countries in the joint training program, the local soldiers learning from Americans are not headed off to fight in a civil war.

The commander of the Special Forces team, Capt. George McDonald is spending June teaching Sri Lankan junior officers, among other things, how to set up a proper helicopter landing and how to make up a precise pickup.

Captain McDonald and his team enjoy the exotic surroundings - "I never dreamed there would be peacocks wondering the air base" the Captain said - but they also know that this is no place for easy going R&R.

As for the Sri Lankan soldiers Capt. McDonald's team is training at the Wirawila air base, many will be soon leaving the peacocks behind and heading for the Tamil battle zone in the north.....

> ***"This talk of great progress is all really wishful thinking on the part of governments like the United States, which want to get more involved in Sri Lanka and has now found a way to do it," Ms Xavier said. "Terrible human-right habits don't change overnight".***

Some human-rights monitors are not convinced that conditions has significantly improved.

"Yes, there has been some improvements for the early 1990's, but young Tamils and other people are still `disappearing' all the time", said Sherine Xavier, and activist for a largely Tamil human-rights group in Colombo. "And the government has yet to punish a single death-squads perpetrator."

Other human-rights officials confirm that although trials of alleged death-squads participants are on the way, nobody has been convicted. Some Sri Lankan officers accused of death-squad crimes remain on active duty.

"This talk of great progress is all really wishful thinking on the part of governments like the United States, which want to get more involved in Sri Lanka and has now found a way to do it," Ms Xavier said. "Terrible human-right habits don't change overnight".

Ms Xavier also said the arrival of American military advisors - word of which, she said, was circulating around Colombo despite newspaper censorship - was a risky step.

"The message to Tamil people in particular is that the US supports the government side," she said. "It will be a big thing - that's surely why they don't want to let it out."

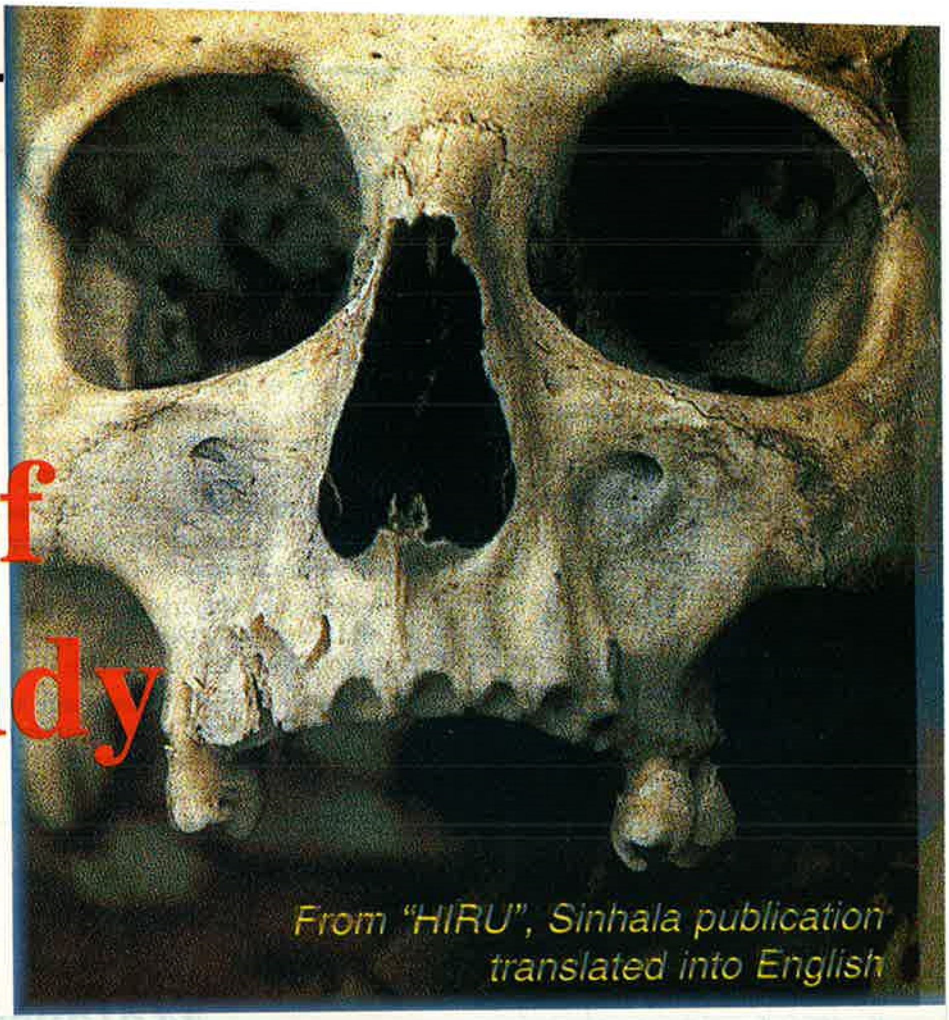
Should the news become widely known in Sri Lanka, protest might follow. There were noisy demonstrations in 1994 over a plan to build the Voice of America relay station on 400 acres alongside the Indian ocean, 30 miles north of Colombo airport.

The protests were led by a local Catholic Bishop, and taken up by a major political party, and featured many marches on the VOA site. During one protest, police killed one protester and wounded others.

A leader of the 1994 protest was Fenando Newton of the Center for Society and Religion, a church-sponsored group in Colombo. He said that rumors in Colombo that US military may be training Sri Lankan soldiers suggest "that all our initial fears about the VOA situation are coming true."

"Definitely, I think there is something sinister going on with the US and Sri Lanka," Mr. Newton said. "I hope it is not true, but if we learn there are American soldiers here in Sri Lanka, then we would have to protest. It is a form of intervention in our internal affairs." ●

In the killing fields of Kiliveddy



From "HIRU", Sinhala publication translated into English

The dawn began to break over the calm grey waters of the eastern sea. Gulls circle in the still dark skies. People enter one by one as soon as the gate of the passenger jetty are opened.

"Are there any batteries inside?", a young policeman inspects my friend's camera suspiciously.

"If there are batteries inside, you can't take it to Muttur - batteries are not allowed."

"There's no point in taking the camera without batteries." There is a note of protest in my friend's voice.

We go to the officer in charge of the checkpoint.

"The camera is no use without batteries. Is a journalist any use without a camera?". His smile does not suit a policeman - he allows it through.

The boat service from Trincomalee to Muttur starts at 6.30 a.m. The service is maintained with three crafts. One belongs to the transport board depot of Trincomalee, and the others to the provisional council and to the co-operative society. The boats fly to and fro six or seven times a day.

The sea route has become the fastest between T'male & Muttur because of the war. It's a complete waste of time taking the Trincomalee-Kantalai highway turning off at the Thambulagamuwa. The sea route is easier than being stopped and searched and questioned at every army checkpoint every mile of the way. But it is dangerous. As the number of passengers increase so does the danger.

Someone says that the boat is delayed an hour due to a burst hydraulic pipe. We think of a way to kill time; Watching the shoals of fish that suddenly rise over the water becomes boring very soon.

More and more people accumulate because of the delay.

"What would happen if the boat is too full?" I ask Weerakoon who joined us on the trip.

"The boat crosses a trench under the sea called Paathalamalai and about a year ago a boat capsized, and about 80 people died, there were only two survivors. None of the bodies were found, the water's just too deep there."

It is after this incident that the overloading of the craft had stopped. It is also after that the police started taking down the names and ID card numbers of the passengers, said Sarath, from T'male.

Men and women queue separately at the table where their details are taken down. It was nearly 9 a.m. when the boat, scheduled at 6. 30 left, - after repairs.

The sea journey from T'male to Muttur is slow and takes more than an hour. The harsh glare of the late morning sun bears down directly on the boat, full now of passengers laden down with baggage and policemen and soldiers returning to their camps at Muttur. One of the two soldiers is leaning against the railing, reads a women's magazine. Small children seem used to this tiring sea voyage. Although the boat begins to rock perilously as we pass the Prima jetty and approach Paathalamalai some passengers nod and doze. Weerakoon says that the danger becomes less as the stormy weather around T'male subsides and the sea become calm.

We had told the checkpoint at T'male that we were going to Muttur, but at Muttur we were going to have to say that we were going to Kiliveddy. We weren't too sure that we would then be allowed to pass through with the camera. We started thinking out a plan. A Tamil passenger offered to help us.

"I know the police, they won't check me, give me the camera and wait in the bus."

We followed his instructions, within 15 minutes the camera was sent to the bus.

The distance between Muttur and Kiliveddy is more than 8 km. The Kiliveddy bus which leaves from the Muttur jetty soon filled up.

A passenger from Muttur to Kiliveddy has to get through 4 or 5 army checkpoints. There is nothing new in the procedure of checking. At the checkpoint of the army camp on the 59th milepost the checking and the questioning is rigorous.

We said that we were going to Kiliveddy.

"What's there to see in Kiliveddy..?" asked some soldiers.

We smiled, the smile was taken as an answer.

Kumarapuram lies about 14 km before the Kilivedy junction, on the old Trincomalle-Batticaloa road.

Before the midnight on 11th February about 71 families lived at Kumarapuram; now some leave the village. The last government had resettled a large numbers of people from the central highlands, fleeing from the violence of July 83', in the Kumarapuram area.

We went on a narrow path towards the village Kovil. The inhabitants stood at their doors without dipping into the blazing noon sun, the village was enveloped in an eerie silence. Small children played under the parched leafless trees.

The government's forces had attacked Kumarapuram on the 11th of February 1996. We went there exactly one month later on the 12th of March. Religious rites had been organised at the village Kovil for the dead. Many seemed to have no desire to speak. 25 people had died in the army attack on the 11th February but all hope of life of the ones who survived too had been massacred in those few terrible hours of the 11th.

A dry wind blows dust through the village. The Kovil walls are scarred by bullets, as are the hearts of the people.

Arasaratnam Nagarasa is 45 years old and completely blind after being shot during the attack of the 11th.

"We went to harvest the paddy in the morning, there were nothing unusual. In the evening as I was bathing in the canal I heard gunfire from about 3 miles away. The army rushed in that direction, from the junction. I went home as soon as I sensed danger. The villagers were frightened and my wife, my son and I and the neighbours from next door got into one house. I believe we were more than ten." The shock of the event remained still in left his voice.

"Then we heard that the army was coming to the village. They came very soon. We heard the voices speaking Sinhala, and gunfire coming closer. I said to others that we were finished. Really, that's what I thought. Then there was a volley of gunfire and a bullet pierced my right temple and came out of the left."

Nagarasa said, after they heard the soldiers move away from the house Nagarasa's neighbours decided to take him to the small dispensary at Kiliveddy, but Nagarasa had given up all hope.

"I remember being somehow helped out of the house, but before we had gone very far we heard the army coming back. I was taken quickly in to a house near by. Everybody was now afraid for their lives. The people in that house told the people with me to keep me at the door, so that I would be seen from the outside. They thought that the

Malaysian Peace group

"Return to peace talks

CENPEACE

The Executive Director of the Centre for Peace Initiatives (CENPEACE) of Petaling Jeya, Selangor, Malaysia, Fan Yew Leng has issued the following Press statement:-

"We note with great interest an AFP news report from Frankfurt that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have sought foreign mediation ot help resuscitate a cease-fire with the Sri Lanka government.

"It seems the British, Norwegian, Canadian and Australian governments have indicated their readiness to mediate in SriLanka, but now the SriLanka government in Colombo has rejected the offers, arguing that the conflict was an internal affair.

"We are very dissapointed that the Chandrika Kumaratunga government has rejected the mediation offers with a frivolous and untenable argument. In the world today, no issue in any *army wouldn't shoot at a wounded man. My wife and son-in-law stood at the door supporting me. We heard voices speaking Sinhala come close, my wife called out to them not to shoot, then gunfire burst. I felt my wife fall.”* We could not get him to say any more. After that Nagarasa had been transferred from the Trincomalle hospital to Kandy, and then to Colombo. When he came back a month later in the bus from Muttur to Kiliveddy he was blind - for life.

Pakyarasa Parwathi is 25 years old. Her 4 year old daughter Vasanthini died in the shooting on the 11th.

“............ I was next door, when I heard gunfire I ran back home, my husband was not at home. I shut the doors and windows. The army shot all around the house shouting open the door.” That was how her daughter been hit.

35 year old Sunderalingam Pradayarani had lost her 11 year old son and 3 year old daughter. She could hardly speak as she remembered.

“........... as I heard gunfire I sent my husband and two children to my sister's house. But that was where the army went to first. My husband hugged the children to him and begged not to shoot, but they did. A bullet pierced my husband's hand went through my daughter's chest. They shot both the children and my sister.” Pradayarani began to sob.

Everyone's story was the same. Subramaniam Gnanam's mother had been killed, both daughters of 65 year old Arunasalam Thangavel died in hospital. Among the dead were 10 children under 14 and 2 adults over 60.

10 year old Palanivel Yogarani had survived, after being shot.

- *“Can you tell us what happened?”* She shook her head.

- *“Can you remember what happened?”* She shook her head.

We came back.

The last boat to Trincomalee left Muttur jetty at around 5 p.m. Sarath watches the Muttur jetty recede covered in swirling dust. No more than seven or eight passengers make the journey back to Trincomalee.

Darkness falls on the gunmetal-grey waters of the eastern sea. The twilight recedes over the prima jetty.

Gulls circle overhead.

A Moslem man seated against the railing, dozes. The villagers of the Kumarapuram must be by now getting ready for another night in the parched wasteland of Kiliveddy, where the wind swirls the dust all day. Will the little girl who didn't remember -Yogarani- wake up in the middle of the night frightened by the nightmares of her memory?

The lights of the Trincomalee jetty shine from afar, but it is darkness behind us. ●

(Translated from the original Sinhala. This article appeared in the ***`Hiru' April 1996.*** *The article was written in a poetic way and inevitably much is lost due to the impossibility of translating accurately the stylistic nuances that are specific to Sinhala cultural-social reality.)*

tells Chandrika: without pre-conditions”

country or territory which involves the important questions of war and peace, basic human rights, life and death and justice should and could be strictly and narrowly considered as an “internal affair’.

“Any such issue is the concern of all members of Humanity, beyond the confines of mere physical and man-made boundaries. If every humanitarian issue is an “internal affair”, then appartheid in South Africa would still be alive and kicking today and the genocide in Bosnia- Herzegovina would still be unresolved, just to mention two cases.

“Moreover, the Kumaratunga government is contradicting itself on this point. In an annual state of the union address last Friday, President Chandrika Kumaratunga called for foreign support to battle the LTTE.

“If the conflict in Sri Lanka were an 'internal affair', President Chandrika Kumaratunga should not have called for foreign suport. She cannot have her cake and eat it. Her contradictiory statements are a reflection of her confused thinking. Is this perhaps the principal cause of the non resolution of this tragic 50 year old ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka?

“If President Chandrika Kumaratunga is really interested in a genuine and durable peace, then she must discard all lame excuses for not returning to the negotiating table with the help of foreign mediation. By doing so, she is missing a golden opportuniy which could lead to the winning of peace with justice in Sri lanka. She must have the courage to give peace a chance and not be a prisoner of the demands and illadvice of the generals and the Buddhist clergy surrounding her.

“Furthermore, the peace process in Sri Lanka can only be restarted realistically if the government in Colombo stops insisting on preconditions.

The conflict in Sri Lanka has cost more than 50,000 lives in the last thirteen years. Many others have been maimed, raped, tortured and rendered homeless. How long must this horrendous tragedy go on?

There can be no military solution to the conflict. There can only be a political settlement.

“We call on the Sri lankan Government to give genuine peace with justice a chance”.

Presidency, Devolution of

(Excerpts from a speech made by Professor Gamini Lakshman Peiris, Sri Lanka's Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, at the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. the Federal Republic of Germany on 20th May 1996)

".... In Sri Lanka we had experience of an Executive Presidential system since 1978. By 1994 the people of Sri Lanka were deeply convinced that the executive presidential system was not a beneficial mechanism for the political culture of our country because it trifled the initiative, creativity and vigour of other institutions which are equally indispensable for the proper functioning of democracy. Almost every other institutional value was suppressed. denigrated by the all encompassing power of the executive Presidency......

"In the relationship among individuals as well as among institutions, equality cannot exist if one is solely dependent upon the goodwill and the magnanimity of the other. So, if Parliament can be dismissed at any time by the President then Parliament is subservient to the President. That is a tradition that we wanted to depart from and we wanted to restore Parliament's authority, stature and prestige. However, in order to do this, it was necessary to make certain other changes with regard to the composition and the power of Parliament......

"Then again in the process of transferring power from the hands of the executive President to the hands of Parliament, we would like to transform the electoral system in our country - the method of electing Members of Parliament. Now in that regard there is a direct analogy. an explicit parallel with the German system. At the moment we have in Sri Lanka the system of proportional representation. Now that is on the whole a good system because it makes for a balanced Parliament. That is a good thing.But there is also a disadvantage. There is negative aspect.

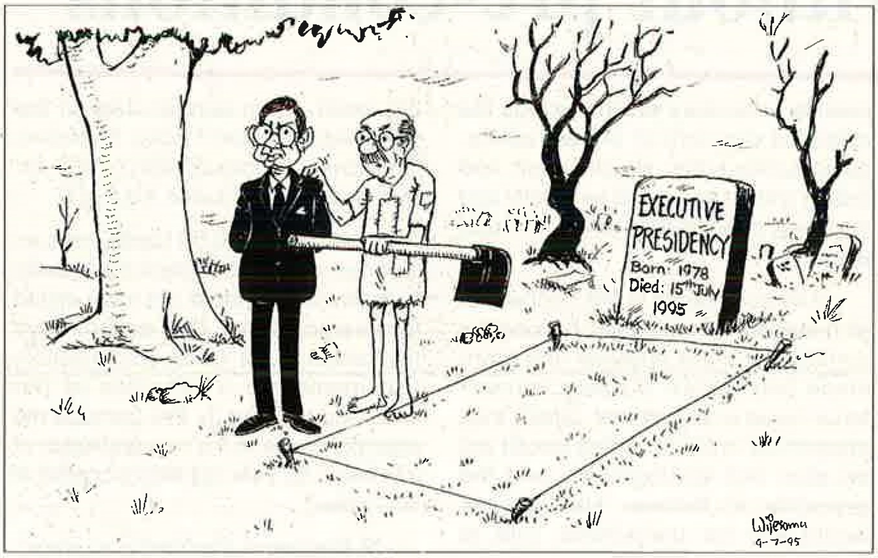
The negative aspect is the absence of a sufficiently proximate nexus - sufficiently close link between the Member of Parliament and the constituency that he is supposed to represent. So a member of the public who has a particular problem that he wants solved does not know whom he should approach. He cannot be certain which Member of Parliament he should go to because in Sri Lanka Members of Parliament represent a whole district i.e a very large area. but not a particular territorial constituency as under the British system. Now what we are endeavouring to do is to secure for our country the advantages/benefits of both these systems by evolving a hybrid, a mixed system which derives its inspiration in the final analysis from the German political and constitutional system. That is, you have a certain number of Members of Parliament representing territorial constituencies and then you have a topping up process on the basis of proportional represen-tation.

Germany has evolved a system that captures the major benefits of both these approaches and that is the hybrid system which we are in the process of developing for our own country.

"So we wish to transform the Sri Lankan legislature in these ways and then to empower the legislature by transferring to the legislature a substantial volume of discretionary power which at the moment reposes in the hands of the executive President.

Now this is to do with as I said earlier the empowerment of all political institutions and in so doing to breathe new life into a throbbing, functioning democracy in a developing country. It is not only Parliament that has been devalued by the Executive Presidency. All other institutions that matter have suffered a similar fate. This is also true of the Judiciary.......

"Now the second major change that the people of our country expected is the devolution of power. There



The cartoon speaks for itself. Sri Lanka's foremost cartoonist W.R.Wijesoma in THE ISLAND of July 9, 1995. The bemused gentleman in the black suit is of course Prof. G. L. Peiris

Power & Prof.G.L.Peiris

is no need to emphasise to a German audience the value of Federal and quasi Federal structures. They enabled the achievement of unity in the midst of diversity, different cultural patterns in Schelswig-Holstein, in Bavaria, in Saxony, in Baden-Wurttemberg and so on. However, for certain limited purposes it is possible for all these lander to come together in matters connected with the foreign policy of the Federal Republic - the national budget and so on. Now that is what we are seeking to achieve through the devolution of power.

"In so doing we are departing from the postulate of the unitary state which we have been accustomed to for several centuries.

"Therefore, it is to be expected that there would be a certain degree of emotional resistance and there is such emotional resistance in our country. In Germany you have always been accustomed to a federal entity except under the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. In Sri Lanka it has been the opposite.

"However there is today a gradual acceptance on the part of our people that a federal structure is necessary to resolve amicably and in an environment of tranquility the very tense issues that have arisen with regard to the ethnic relationships in our country. That is what we are in the process of doing. So, we will create eight or nine different Regional Councils. We will devolve on those Regional Councils extensive powers with regard to primary education, health, transport. irrigation - all those matters.

"The Regional Councils will have extensive police powers as in the German States. We will ensure that the Regional Councils will have sufficient finances at their disposal to carry out their duties with a sense of effectiveness. Otherwise, however much power you devolve, if they do not have the wherewithal the pecuniary resources then that will not be a meaningful or useful arrangement.

"At the same time, we have taken care to ensure that the regional units are not carved out on ethnic lines because that is dangerous. It can lead finally to ethnic cleansing and the experience of former Yugoslavia for example. would bear that out.

"So the regional entities will be carved out on the basis of geographical factors rather than on the basis of ethnic considerations. We have also seen to it that the centre will possess sufficient power to ensure the territorial integrity, the sovereignty and the unity of our country.

"We have made provision in our Constitution to prevent the holding of the kind of referendum that was in fact held in Quebec to determine whether Quebec should continue to be part of Canada or whether Quebec should secede from Canada and form a different State. That will not be allowed because secession will not be permissible under the provisions of the new constitution. "

"Now in order to implement this there are two requirements which we have to fulfil. One is. we need a two-thirds majority in Parliament. Secondly. after we achieved that two-thirds majority we have to submit these proposals to the people at a referendum, a national referendum. We are now engaged in both ctivities.. There is a Select Committee of Parliament which is going into the devolution proposals in great depth. The Select Committee is appointed by the Speaker of Parliament. It functions under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Constitutional Affairs and we are talking to the different political parties to ensure the two-thirds in Parliament for these proposals that is necessary because the Government itself does not have a twothirds majority in Parliament. We hope to complete that process by about the end of this year and to plan for the holding a national referendum sometime next year. Time limits cannot be exactly specified simply because the Government does not have a two-thirds majority at its disposal. But that is our current thinking and our present expectations....." ●

மிழர் புனர்வாழ்வுக் கழகத்தினதும்
கரைச்சி பிரதேச செயலகத்தினதும்
ஆதரவுடன்
ன் அபிவிருத்தி நிறுவனத்தால்
ப்படும் மாதிரிக் குடியிருப்பு.

A model rural settlement being inaugurated in the Vanni district by the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO)

JAFFNA IS SCARRED, STRAFED AND FAR FROM NORMAL

Sri Lanka wants the world to believe the things have returned to normal in Jaffna, since government forces seized control from the Tamil Tigers. But things are not quite what the Government claims, writes Sydney Morning Herald Correspondent JUDITH FAHEY

Jaffna: At the Hindu Ladies' College the girls have assembled in the school hall to await their honoured guests.

A small group of women in colourful saris is waiting outside. One suddenly announces, "They're here." And the women hurry to their places in the front row.

Students and staff stand to attention as the visitors arrive. The visitors saunter in casually, array themselves across the stage and start shooting: the media has arrived in Jaffna.

It is one of the first opportunities journalists have had to see Jaffna since the province was made off-limits to them 14 months ago.

The photographs, representing Sri Lankan and Indian organisations stroll around the hall, capturing candid shots of the girls, who are pristinely groomed and dressed in whit frocks, socks and shoes, with their black hair plaited into braids.

The reporters want to know how life has changed in Jaffna since the Sri Lankan Army wrested control of the Tamil town from the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) guerillas last December.

But confronted by camera-laden city men, the girls are desperately shy. Lacking the quotes they need, the reporters prompt them for a response, any response.

Life is better for you now, no? The girls look at one another for support and smile.

So you feel good, you just want peace, yes? More looks to another and murmured, uncertain, "yes".

Sri Lanka's Department of Information had invited a group of journalists to see the alleged success of the offensive known as Operation Riviresa, in which the Sri Lankan forces seized control of Jaffna town from the LTTE.

The conductor of the tour was Sri Lanka's Director of Information, Ariya Rubasinge, who has an obsession with order and likes to be respected. He is seldom taken seriously by journalists unless they want a favour.

யாழ் இந்து மகளிர் கல்லூரி

Jaffna Hindu Ladies' College

A heavy contingent of soldiers was on hand to ferry the visitors from one institution or conference center to another, passing through the scarred and strafed ruins of Jaffna's suburbs as they went.

Many of the solid cement houses were left with nothing but wall or two standing, although some remained in perfect condition with flourishing gardens.

The first port of call was the board room of the University of Jaffna, where the acting Chancellor told of his plan to return things to "normalcy".

Exams would be held in July to signify this. He admitted much of the university's equipment had been stolen during Operation "Riviresa" but the biggest problem was that a large proportion of the students and staff had been displaced and were scattered in Colombo, and the east of the island.

It would take time for them to get the necessary security clearances to return to Jaffna.

Despite the acting Vice Chancellor's pronouncements, "normality looked a long way off.

There wasn't a student to be seen on the campus; the ground and halls, on the other hand, were crawling with Sri Lankan soldiers.

At the secound port of call "media representative for the province of benignly, he said in cliches: "You must understand this is a firefighting exercise, a super-human job we have done".

Few journalists bothered to take notes. At a boys' school the students insisted they were happy with life under the new regime. Pushing things a little, Defence spokesman Brigadier Moonasinge prompted one class: "Hands up who want to join the Sri Lankan Army". Not a hand was raised. "Well, hands up who wants to play cricket." They broke out in eager smiles.

Later the group was flown by helicopter to Point Pedro in the far north of the peninsula. The small town was taken by Sri Lankan forces only five weeks ago.

"The idea was to show how well things were going at Jaffna's only functioning hospital, by giving reporters more than an hour's freedom to explore those roads that were not blocked by army posts. The town is totally isolated as the surrounding area remains under Tiger control.

The streets were deserted; the only scene of any activity was an office where the weekly food distribution is handled. The residents depend on food shipped from the port by relief agencies. They are desperately poor, yet accommodating to the stranger.

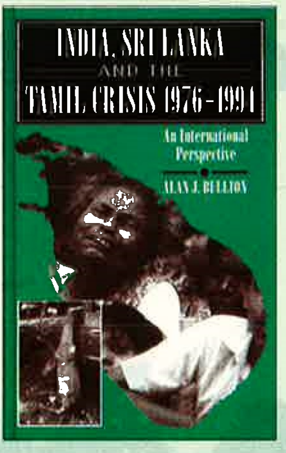
It was impossible to gauge the villagers' thoughts on the new regime in Point Pedro, but anaesthetist at the hospital, Pierre Zickler of Medecins Sans Frontieres, said support for the Tigers remained strong - the Tigers had always fed and looked after these people.

Father J.P.E. Selvaraja, effectively in charge of the town's Catholic community after remaining there through every turn of the 14-year ethnic war, said the military had changed it's attitude towards the Jaffna people in the past six months.

As a result they accepted the new regime. The Tigers had lost the hold. Even so nothing could be certain.

"You'd never get a Jaffna man to tell you what he thinks," Father Selvaraja said. "He'll know what to do when the time comes." ●

For your bookshelf



INDIA, SRI LANKA and the TAMIL CRISIS - 1976-1994

An International Perspective
ALAN J.BULLION

Cassell Publishers Ltd.,
Wellington House.
125. Strand, London WC2R OBB.
England 215 Park Avenue South.
New York, NY 1OOO3, USA

Publishers' Note: This study explores the regional security complex of the Indian subcontinent with particular reference to the events surrounding the Tamil crisis since 1976. The political interrelationship between India and Sri Lanka is unravelled, providing the background to the ethnic violence and political assassinations in India and Sri Lanka which have proved a lasting threat to regional stability.

The focal point of the relationship between the two countries was the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord of 1987, signed by the then Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, and the Sri Lankan President J.R.Jayewardene. The subsequent three-year deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) severely compromised the short-term consolidation of Indian hegemony. In Sri Lanka the militarization of the Tamil nationalists and the failure of the IPKF was to have dire consequences for both states.

This book contributes a unique and non-partisan analysis of events, with up-to-date commentary on the 1994 Sri Lanka presidential election and the signing of the ceasefire between the government and the Tamil Tigers in January 1995.

Full texts of key agreements, letters and speeches provide important documentation to the text.

Dr. Alan Bullion lectures in Politics, Economics and European Studies for the Open University.

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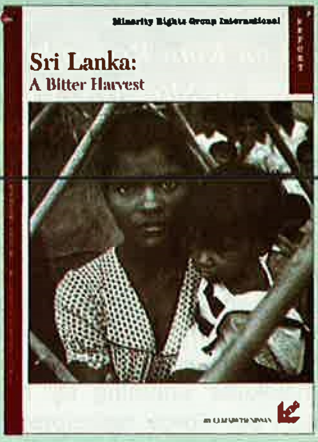

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"Indian Navy had no right to intercept the vessel" - Judge

A court in the south Indian city of Vishakapatnam has ordered the release of nine people suspected to be separatist Tamil Tiger rebels who were intercepted by Indian Navy and arrested in 1993 under the provisions of the Terrorism Prevention Act, reports Sampath Kumar of BBC, Madras on June 29.

In its judgement the special court said the charges against the accused had not been proved beyond doubt. The nine accused were on a ship which was intercepted by Indian Navy about 440 nautical miles off Madras. The inmates refused to surrender and were said to have to have blown up the vessel, which was allegedly carrying explosives and arms. A prominent leader of the Sri Lankan separatist group, Tamil Tigers, Kittu, was among those killed in the explosion. The nine survivors were arrested.

The court in its order said that Indian Navy had no right to intercept the vessel when it wasn't heading towards India, and wasn t committing a hostile act against India. Instead. the Indian Navy could've alerted the Sri Lankan government about the ship's movements.

The nine accused were acquitted and the court ordered that they may be handed over to the government of Honduras to see if they had violated the law of that country as the vessel was registered in Honduras.

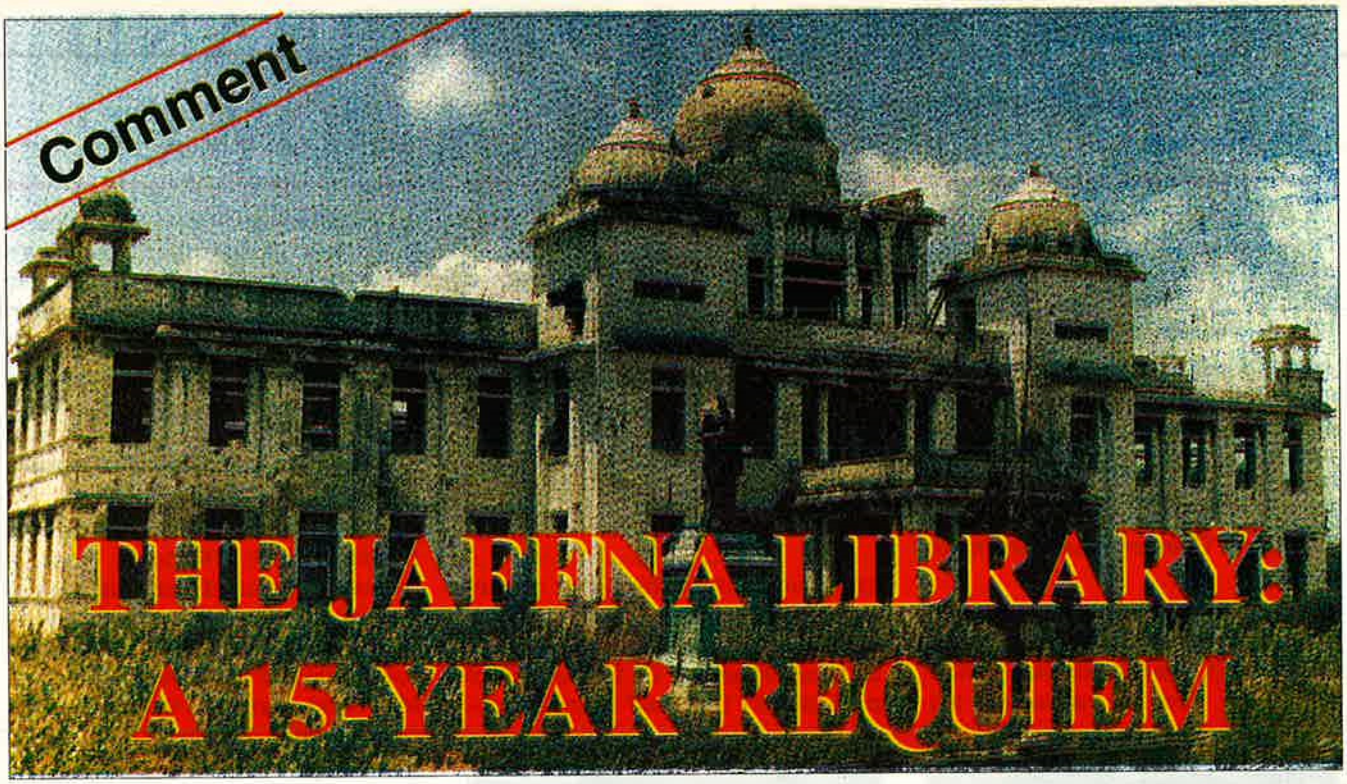
எம்.பி.ஆசாத்
M.P.AZATH

Float on Kittu Remembrance Day in Jaffna: Kittu with mock-up of Ship M.P.Azath in which he gave up his life.

Civilians killed by Sri Lankan forces denied death certificates

The Sri Lankan Government Medical authorities are refusing to issue medical reports confirming cause of death or injury to Tamil civilians who are killed or injured in attacks by the Sri Lankan armed forces. The medical authorities say the Sri Lankan Government has not authorised them to issue any documents to the victims of Sri Lankan Air Force bombings, Military shelling or Army gunfire. A Tamil woman who was injured in the Nachchikuda bombing by the Sri Lankan Air Force helicopters was recently transferred from Kilinochchi Government Hospital to Vavuniya Government Hospital for further treatment. The hospital authorities did not issue her any documents regarding her injuries saying they are not permitted to do so.

Comment



THE JAFFNA LIBRARY: A 15-YEAR REQUIEM

> ***"It was decided at last week's Cabinet rneeting that the Library should be rebuilt without delay as a symbol of friendship between the people of the North and South of the country, a communique from the Presidential Secretariat said".***
>
> *SUNDAY OBSERVER*, June 23, 1996

Imagine a chosen target of southern arson and terrorism in the north 15 years ago. suddenly becoming a symbol of friendship between the people of the North and South; all because it suits Presidential politics!

Fifteen years have gone since some rowdy minions of the Sri Lankan State reduced the Jaffna Public Library's ninety five thousand books and rare ola manuscripts to ashes and dust.

What happened on that dark June night of 1981 left Jaffna stunned into disbelief. A venerable Catholic priest. a linguist and scholar, died of shock. Hundreds of Jaffna's children who were avid patrons of the Children's section, roamed among the ashes in puzzlement, looking for little unburnt fragments to carry away as mementos. Jaffna soon went into quiet mourning. Physical wounds may heal. but those deliberately inflicted on a nation's psyche do not.

But while Jaffna grieved, the South was passing through its own area of darkness. The so-called national Press of that time (with the exception of one Marxist paper) blacked out the news. What should have been by accepted yardsticks of journalism a Page 1 lead story became a non-event.

A monstrous crime as it was. it wasn't just a library. It was an act of planned incendiarism on two successive nights, in the presence of (if not under the active guidance of) two Cabinet Ministers - the late Gamini Dissanayake and Cyril Mathew.

The selected targets were far away from each other: the Library, the *EELANADU*, Jaffna's only newspaper at that time half a mile away. the office of the Tamil United Liberation Front at Main Street, a popular bookstall opposite the bus stand, another bookshop near the hospital. The reserve police rabble imported from the south kept in readiness at the Durayappah stadium could not have known Jaffna's geography, nor could they have distinguished a library from a mortuary: it was obvious that a knowledgeable hidden hand had directed the operations.

The Press cover-up in Colombo was so effective that an academic holding a top position of authority in a well-known research organisation in Colombo who happened to be in Matara at that time was told an ingenious story: that the Library had housed the Paranavitane collection (not true anyway), and the Jaffna Tigers knowing that Paranavitane's books would have debunked the existence of a Jaffna kingdom, had set fire to their own library! That was certainly not the kind of story that mobs make up.

What was most disturbing about it was the fact that the learned academic had believed it.

It must be placed on record that even after the truth became known, no Sinhala voices were raised against this calculated act of cultural genocide. The glorious exceptions were (as far as we knew) two Sinhala intellectuals - **IAN GOONETILEKE**, and **REGI SIRIWARDENE**, who suffered in mind as much as the Jaffna citizens.

S.Sivanayagam

CHANDRIKA, MITTERRAND AND THE TASTE OF POWER

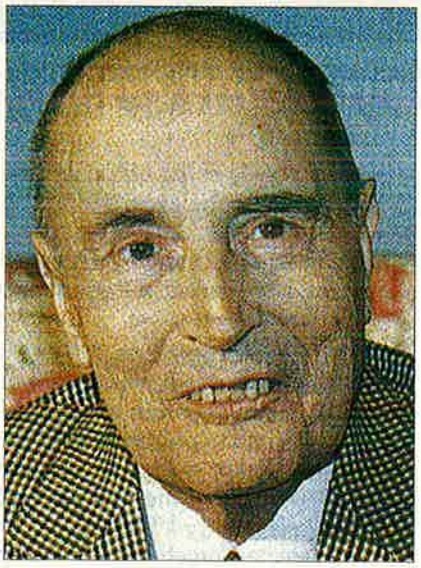
Arjuna's Column

Among the many election pledges that Madame President Chandrika made, and failed to keep, was the promise to abolish the Executive Presidential system by July 15, 1995.

Everyone seems to be convinced that it must go, including her own Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the benign, scholarly Professor Gamini Lakshman Peiris. (see excerpts of his speech in the Federal Republic of Germany elsewhere in this issue).

Mrs.Srimani Athulathmudali who heads one of the constituent parties in the People's Alliance coalition, is now apparently tired of reminding the President of her broken promise; she is now even dropping hints that she might pull out of the one majority government. Two women in the centre of power is always a difficult proposition! See what has been happening in Bangladesh. Sections of the independent Colombo Press have also time and again returned to the subject of this broken pledge.

Chandrika



Mitterrand

With poor Prof.Peiris unable to do justice to his Constitutional Affairs portfolio, and philosophising in distant Germany. the Executive Presidency refuses to go. Can it be attributed to political amnesia? Or to the lack of political will? Or to self-imposed constitutional hurdles ? Or could it be sheer taste of power ? Remember what Lord Acton once said: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" ?

Meanwhile. the man who authored it all, and took pride in it , (Except to change a man into a woman and a woman into a man, I have the power to do anything), is sitting with a self-satisfied smirk on his face at "Braemar", Ward Place cogitating on life.

He might have been "the dirtiest of politicians" in President Chandrika's words. but dirt, as we all know tends to stick on oneself. when you start throwing it around.

Talking of the taste of power, this column is reminded of what a TIME magazine reader from Germany said about the late former French President Francois Mitterrand:

"Mitterrand attacked Charles de Gaulle's Fifth Republic as a "permanent coup d'etat", because of the excessive power wielded by de Gaulle when he was President. When Valery Giscard d'Estaing took the job, Mitterrand referred to that President's concentration of power. Mitterrand repeatedly called for a revision of the French constitution so that it would limit presidential powers, shorten the President's term and increase the powers and independence of Parliament and the judiciary.

"Of course this was conveniently put aside when Mitterrand himself assumed the office. He concentrated power as much as any of his predecessors or more ". Only during his second term did he start talking again about revising the constitution.

What Mitterrand told Nixon

"One explanation can be found in Richard Nixon's memoir IN THE ARENA . Commenting on the powers of de Gaulle's presidency Mitterrand told Nixon:

"WE DIDN'T LIKE IT WHEN HE WAS IN, BUT WE LIKE IT MUCH BETTER NOW THAT WE ARE IN ".

It is not for nothing that Sri Lanka's Madame President had her political education at Sorbonne in Paris !

* * * * *

THE MAN WHO GOES PLACES

Who is the most-travelled Foreign Minister in the world ? No prizes offered, but surely the answer is on everyone's lips.

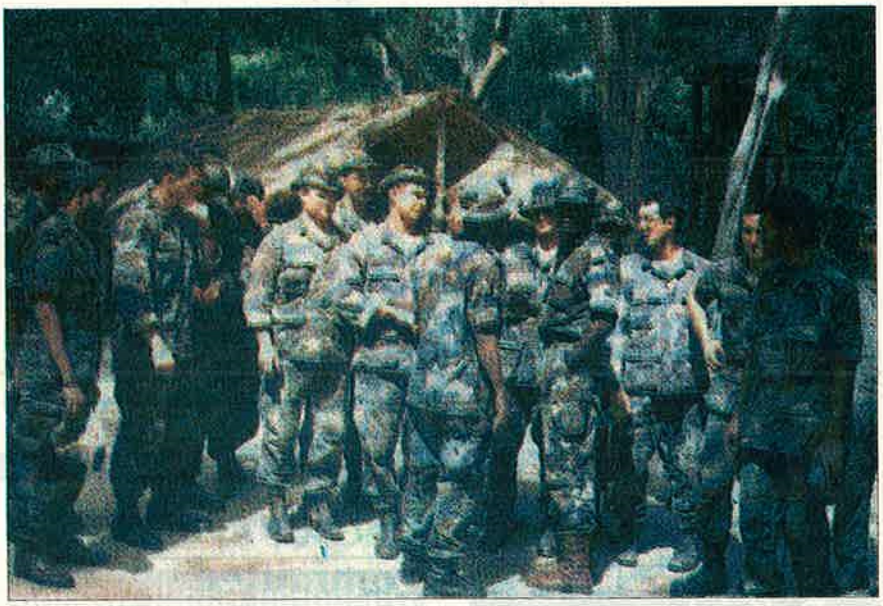
Considering the period he was in office, Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister with a Tamil name must have broken all records in high-flying, even if the Guiness Book of Records has not come round to admitting it. Poor A.C.S.Hameed of the UNP who held the same office for a much longer period was once accused of his peripatetic habits, but grant it to him that he never engaged in his travels with the single-minded pursuit of seeking help from foreign governments to fight one's own local war. But this man is like a beaver at work. One day he is in America, next we hear he is in Britain, Switzerland and Paris. He goes to China, and the next we hear is that he is in Japan. The other day, we were told he was in Indonesia, but we were told yes. that was correct yesterday, but today he is in India. We haven't heard so far whether he has been seen in Timbuctoo or Tahiti, but according to a reliable source he was sighted in Colombo recently, but we cannot vouch for the fact.

That reminds us of an old story about that efficient globetrotter Civil servant Raju Coomarasamy when he used to work as an Under Secretary at the UN. That affable Communist Pieter Keuneman running into "Roving Raju" in the corridors of the Colombo Secretariat one day had hailed him with the words: "Hello Raju, passing through ?".

The UN of course could afford to pay for Raju. but here the Sri Lankan tax payer is footing the bill, does he not? The nature of this man's missions being what it is. shouldn't the cost of his travels be included in the military budget ?

WHITE FACES IN TIGER LAND?

The SUNDAY LEADER, Colombo, had a photographic scoop on its front page in the issue of June 23. Several white faces in military fatigues are shown under the cryptic caption: Our soldiers and "others" at a brief discussion somewhere in Sri Lanka. Who are these "others" ? Surely can't be from India ? Another reason for the wise old fox at Ward Place to chuckle about ?



Of relevance here is an extract from a white man. this time a member of the SAS. Says Andy McNAB in his book IMMEDIATE ACTION The True Story of his Life in the SAS by the author of BRAVO TWO ZERO:

"..... Maybe Al's death was the first big test of his Christian faith. Frank left the Regiment soon afterwards and decided to train to be the ayotollah. However. he wanted to pay off his mortgage before he enrolled at Bible College, and his first freelance job took him to SRI LANKA.

"Frank lasted two weeks. When I saw him much later in Hereford he said:

"THEY HAD NO UNDERSTANDING OF RIGHT OR WRONG AND THOUGHT NOTHING OF WIPING OUT TAMILS. SOME OF THE PEOPLE WE TRAINED COMMITTED ATROCITIES. IT WAS WELL-PAID. BUT I CAME STRAIGHT HOME".

Tamil - speaking diaspora

Several readers have phoned to cast doubts about the data given (and complain of a misprint as well) in the item TAMIL-SPEAKING DIASPORA in the June issue of HOT SPRING.

One reader wanted to know whether Tamil-speaking people of Indian origin, for example, Pondicherry Tamils living in France have been included in the data. We hope to update the figures once we could lay our hands on the latest figures (Ed.HS.)

Social & Personal

Married

RASAKULASURIAR - VIJAYADEVA

Mr. Suresh Rasakulasuriar, son of Mr. E. Rasakulasuriar, formerly of the Sri Lankan Railways, and Mrs. Rasakulasuriar, 35 Beemeed Avenue, Kenton married Dr. Sheila Vijayadeva, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Vijayadeva of 49 Anglesmede Crescent Pinner, Harrow on 9 June at the Hammersmith Town Hall, London. Bride is a Dental Surgeon and the groom is a Computer Engineer.

* * *

SOMANATHAN - SUNTHARALINGAM

Dr.Lakshman Somanathan son of Mr. S. Somanathan and Dr. Mrs. Somanathan, Hillcroft, Green Lane Chessington married Dr. Jayanthi Suntharalingam, daughter of Mr & Mrs M.Suntharalingam of 28, Collingwood place, Colombo 6, on 6 April at Hilton Hotel, Colombo. A wedding reception was held by the parents of the bride and groom at Fairfield Hall, Croydon on 28 April. Both bride and groom are attached to Charring Cross Hospital, Fulham, London.

ORPHANAGE IN TRINCO APPEALS FOR HELP

(From our Trincomalee correspondent)

Sivananda Thapovanam in Uppuveli, Trincomalee, which is a registered charity, has been running a Children's Orphanage for the past 30 years. During the course of the ethnic conflict in 1985, the entire buildings belonging to the Orphanage in Uppuveli were destroyed. Since then, the Orphanage was maintained with great difficulty in private premises in Trincomalee town.

The Orphanage looks after 80 children, both male and female, but there is an increasing demand for more admissions, which cannot be met.

The land belonging to the Orphanage at Uppuveli covers $11^{1/2}$ acres, and with no protective walls, attempts are being made to encroach on the land. The Thapovanam needs urgent funds to build protective concrete walls as a matter of priority. Once that is done, the intention is to put up two permanent buildings, and run the orphanage back at its own premises in Uppuveli.

Benefactors are requested to send their contributions to:

Sivananda Thapovana Children's Home,
People's Bank, Trincomalee
A/C No. 2554.

OBITUARIES

DEATHS

Dr.Krishnasamy Sangarapillai

Dr.Sangarapillai Krishnasamy (68) son of late Advocate Sangarapillai and Mrs. Sangarapillai of Puloly, Point-Pedro died of a heart attack in Madras on 10 June. He obtained a Physics Honours degree from the University of Ceylon and a Ph.D. from Durham University. He was lecturer in Physics at Singapore University and took early retirement and resided in Adyar: He leaves behind several brothers and sisters among whom are Mrs Valli Suriyakumaran, Kamala Kanapathipillai S.Ganeson and S.Sriskantha.

Appreciation

Wijendran Ranjit Watson D.Phil (Oxford)

Ranjit, son of O.J.J. Watson and Bimala Hensman. grandson of the revered Ceylon educationalist W.R. Watson, was born on 2 October 1948. He distinguished himself at St.Thomas' College, Mt.Lavinia in his studies as well as in cricket. On coming to the UK, he joined the Polytecnic of the South Bank, now known as the University of the South Bank, and obtained First Class Honours in Chemical Technology.

He then proceeded to New College, Oxford, where his research into the use of plastic materials for heart valve replacement was rudely interrupted in 1976 by a nasty road accident in which he lost a leg and much of his lower anatomy. This ghastly accident did not put Ranjit off his experiments and eventually he succeeded in finding the answer to his quest for a successful plastic heart valve for human beings. Oxford awarded him a D.Phil for this pioneering piece of research.

Ranjit joined the Commonwealth Secretariat 12 years ago and rose to the rank of Chief Project Officer, Industrial Development and Export Division. Despite his physical disability he went on several assignments abroad. He died in his sleep on 20 May and was cremated at Golders Green on 28 May. He is survived by a sister Renuka Humphrys of 21, Lodge Close, Englefield Green, Surrey.

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